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# DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

Language and Literary Education: The State of  
Children's Literature in Kiswahili in Primary Schools in  
Kenya

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## **Dedication**

To my dear father,  
The late Jotham Yalwala Obindi  
To my dear mother,  
The late Mrs. Norah Isigi Yalwala  
Who urged me to go to school  
To my dear husband,  
Mr. Paul Ngugi Njathi  
Who urged me to further my studies  
To my dear sons: Ian and Robert,  
For your support  
To all God's children in the world who love reading.

### Children learn what they live

If your child lives with criticism  
    He learns to condemn  
If your child lives with hostility  
    He learns to fight  
If your child lives with ridicule  
    He learns to be shy  
If your child lives with shame  
    He learns to be guilty  
If your child lives with tolerance  
    He learns to be patient  
If your child lives with encouragement  
    He learns to be confident  
If your child lives with praise  
    He learns to appreciate  
If your child lives with fairness  
    He learns justice  
If your child lives with security  
    He learns to have faith  
If your child lives with approval  
    He learns to like himself  
If your child lives with acceptance and friendship  
    He learns to find love in the world

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I am grateful to other people who have contributed indirectly to this work: To the head teachers, Kiswahili teachers, pupils and parents who participated in the study. Were it not for your willingness to spare your precious time, this study would not have succeeded.

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*Kwenyu nyote- Baraka tele tele*

I thank God who has been my EBENEZER-this far I have come.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by examining the reading habits of pupils both in school and at home. It highlights the following aspects: attitudes towards reading, the amount of reading materials available to pupils both at school and at home, the accessibility of the reading materials, the frequency of reading for pleasure, the reading environment that pupils are exposed to and any other activities that pupils engage in that contribute to enhancing and maintaining of reading habits. In addition, the study also investigated the role played by other stakeholders in developing and enhancing reading habits in pupils. These included: head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and parents.

The study applied Cognitive Development theory in order to understand the cognitive development of children in relation to the literary competence of the child. The Social Learning theory was also applied in relation to the learning environment of the pupils and finally Reader Response theory was used in order to describe the responses of the pupils to the literature they read. It therefore has a reader-oriented perspective.

Based on questionnaire, informal interviews and observation techniques, the findings reveal that a majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards reading which is associated with passing of examination and gaining knowledge. The study revealed that pupils in lower classes do not seem to gain adequately from the storybook programme since most teachers indicated that reading of storybooks begins in class four. The study revealed that most pupils have no access to public libraries. Although most schools have Kiswahili storybooks, the storybook borrowing policy is too restrictive in most schools. In addition, most schools did not have school libraries. Finally the study revealed that pupils lack active literary models both at school and at home.

The study concludes with the recommendations that will lead to the development and enhancement of reading habits among pupils in primary schools in Kenya.

## **Zusammenfassung**

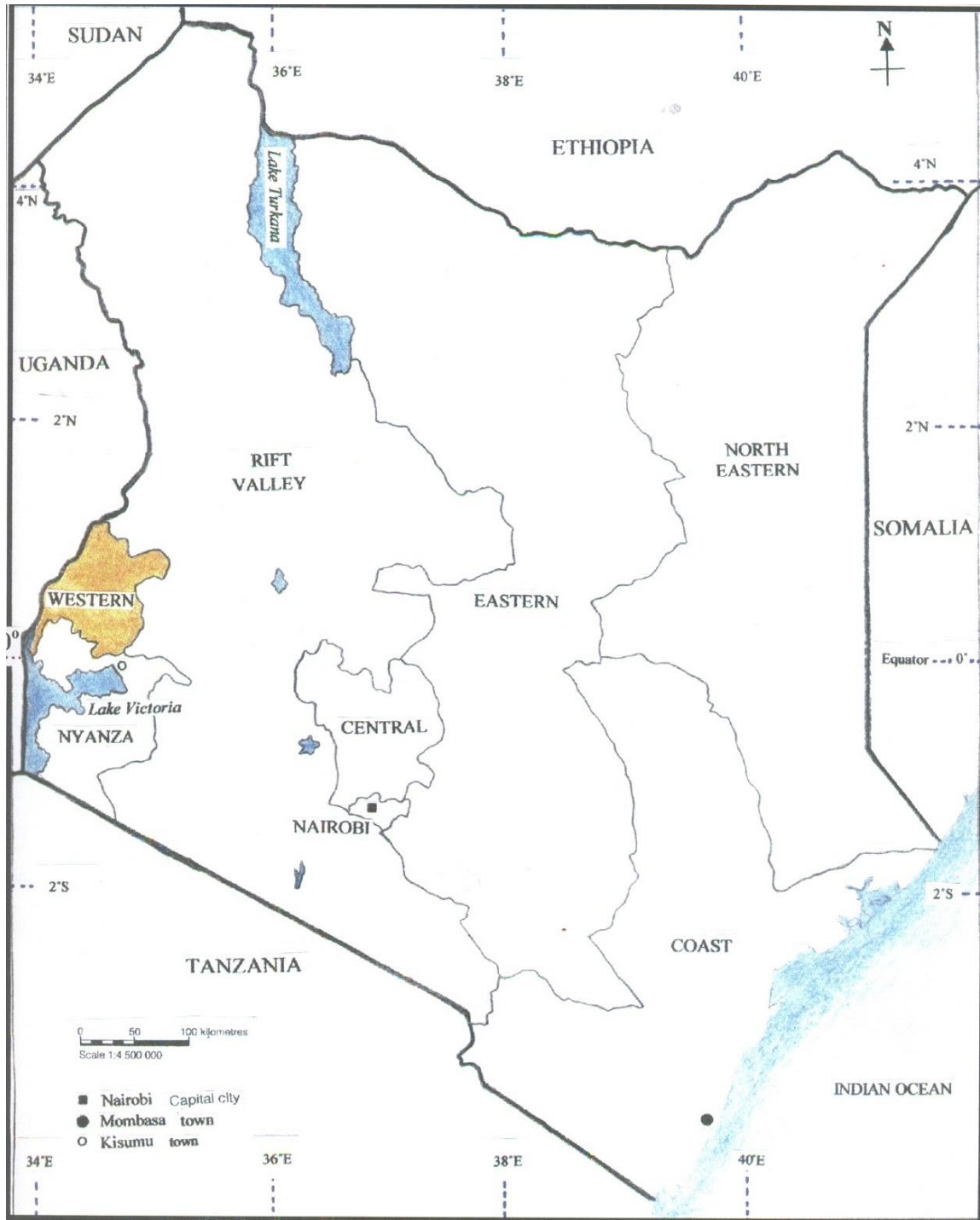
Das Ziel dieser Studie war die Erforschung der Verwendung von Kiswahili Kinderliteratur in den Primarschulen Kenias, wobei die Lesegewohnheiten der Schüler sowohl in der Schule als auch zu Hause untersucht wurden. Dabei wurden folgenden Aspekte besonders berücksichtigt: LeseEinstellung, Häufigkeit des Lesens zum Vergnügen und die Menge des verfügbaren Lesematerials für Schüler, sowohl in der Schule als auch daheim. Zusätzlich untersuchte die Studie die Rolle anderer Beteiligter in der Entwicklung und Verbesserung der Lesegewohnheiten von Schülern, etwa von Schulleitern, Kiswahili- Lehrern und Eltern.

Die Studie verwendet u.a. den Ansatz der Kognitionstheorie um die kognitive Entwicklung der Schüler in Bezug auf deren literarische Kompetenz zu verstehen. Der Ansatz der Sozialen Lerntheorie wurde in Bezug auf die Lernumgebung der Schüler angewendet, der Ansatz der Rezeptionstheorie in Bezug auf die Aufnahme der gelesenen Literatur durch die Schüler. Die Studie ist also an der Perspektive des Lesers orientiert.

Basierend auf Fragebogen, informellen Interviews und Beobachtungstechniken, zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass die Mehrheit der Schüler eine positive LeseEinstellung hat, die mit dem Streben nach Prüfungserfolg und Wissen in Verbindung gebracht werden. Die Studie zeigt, dass Schüler niedrigerer Jahrgänge nicht ausreichend vom Lesebuchprogramm profitieren, da die meisten Lehrer zu verstehen gaben, dass das Lesen von Kinderlesebüchern erst in der vierten Klasse beginne. Die Studie zeigt, dass die meisten Schüler keinen Zugang zu öffentlichen Büchereien haben. Obwohl die meisten Schulen Lesebücher in Kiswahili besitzen, ist die Lesebuch-Entlehnpolitik in den meisten dieser Schulen zu restriktiv. Zusätzlich hat der Großteil der Schulen keine eigene Schulbibliothek. Schließlich zeigte die Studie, dass es den Schülern an aktiven literarischen Vorbildern mangelt, sowohl in der Schule als auch zu Hause.

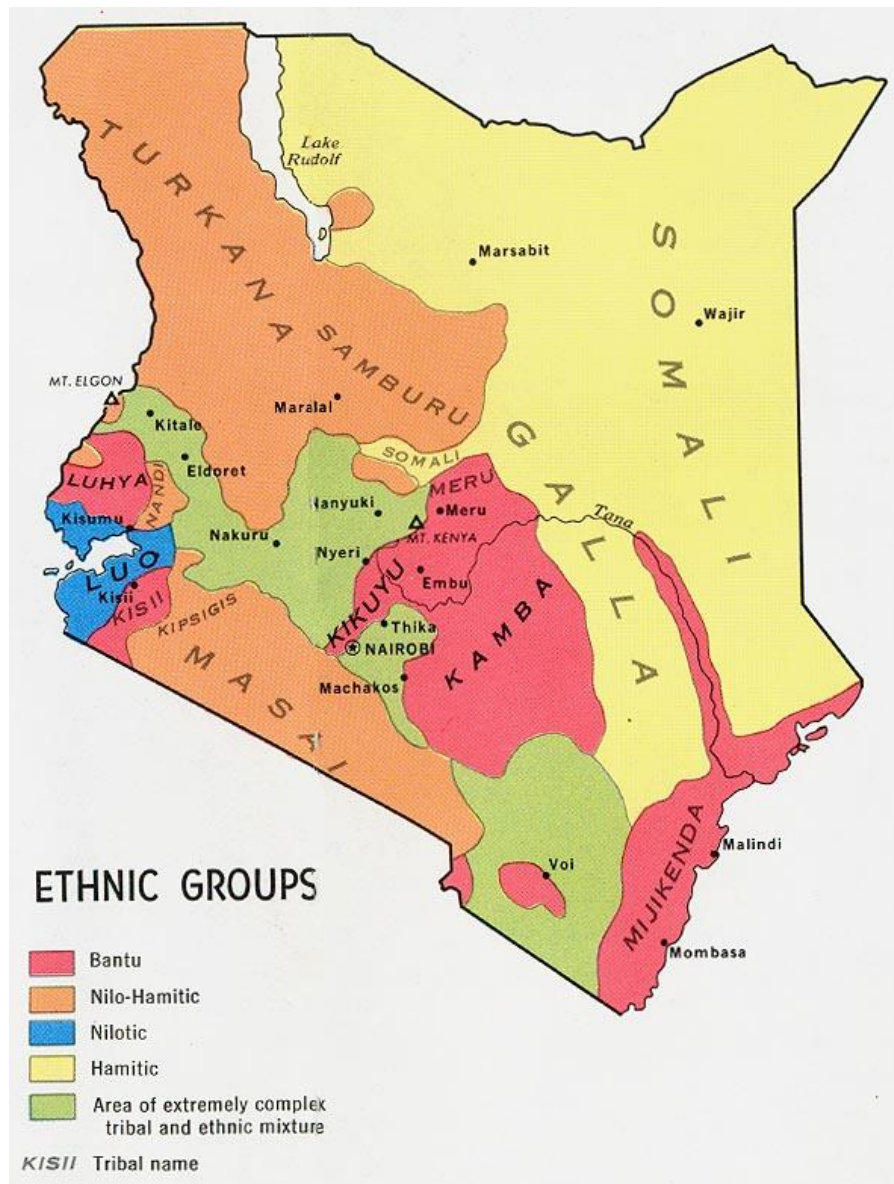
Die Studie schließt mit einer Empfehlung, die zur Entwicklung und Verbesserung der Lesegewohnheiten unter den Schülern der Primarschulen Kenias führen soll.

## Map of Kenya



Source: Atlas of Kenya *East African publishers* 2002

## Languages in Kenya



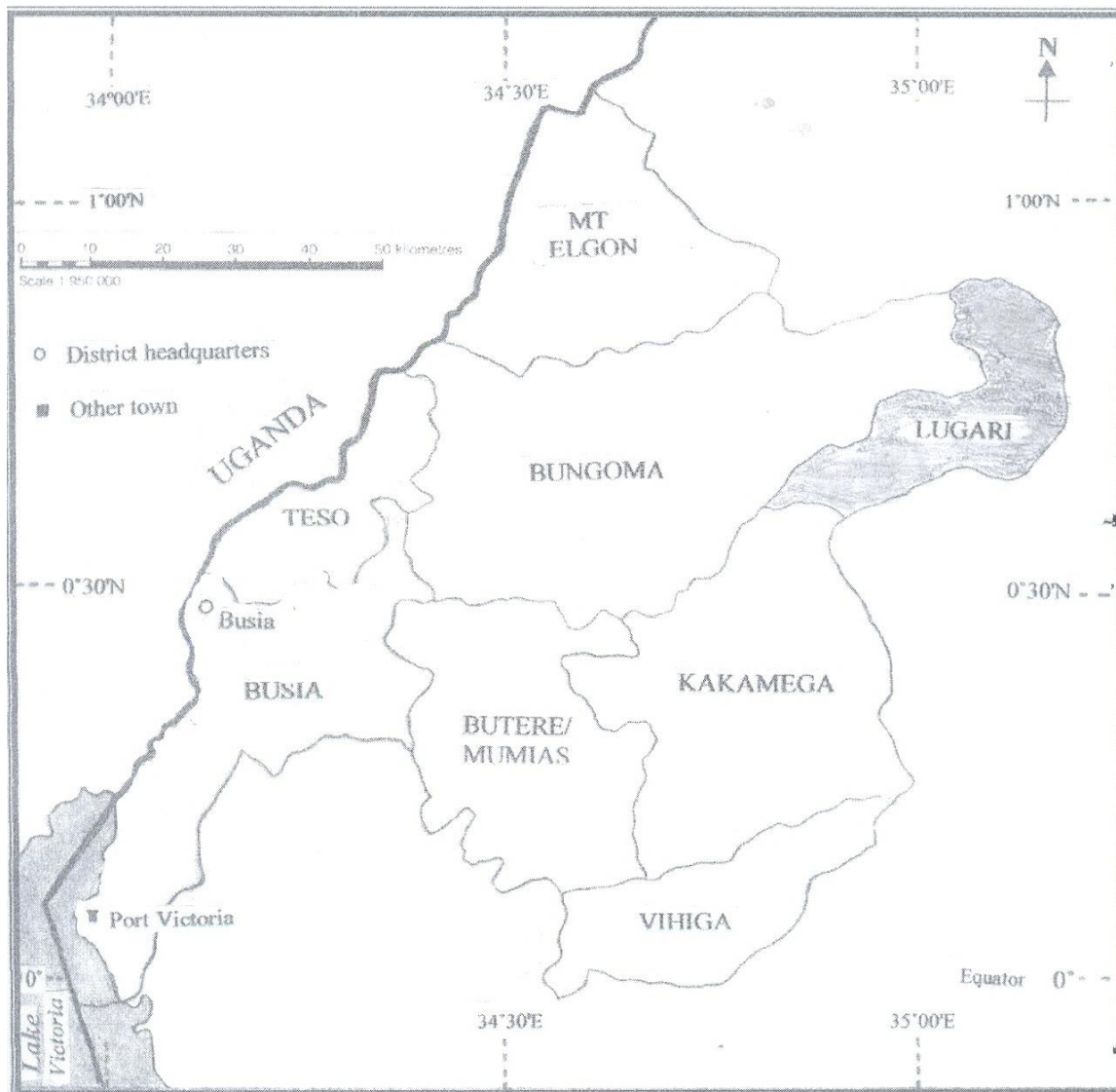
Source:

[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/kenya\\_ethnic\\_1974.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/kenya_ethnic_1974.jpg)

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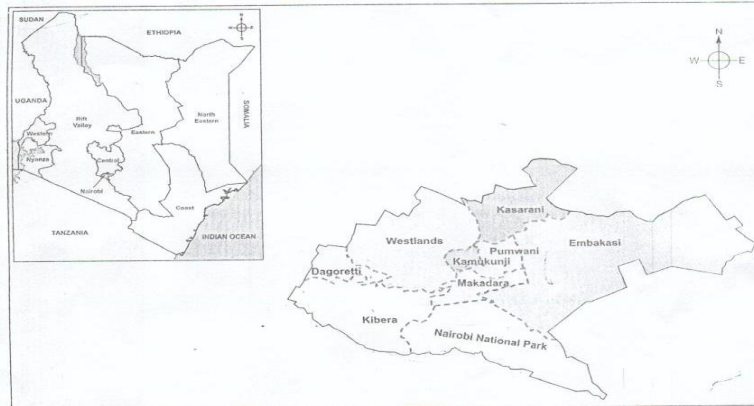


## Districts in Western Province



Source: Atlas of Kenya *East African publishers* 2002

## Divisions in Nairobi



*Fig. 1.5 The divisions that make up Nairobi Province*

Source: Atlas of Kenya *East African publishers* 2002

## **Definition of terms**

In order to enhance discussions in the study, it has become necessary to offer working definition of the terminologies used.

### **Child**

The universal understanding of the term ‘child’ is defined in both *Encyclopaedia America* (vol. 6) and *Encyclopaedia International* (vol. 4) as ‘a person from age zero to seventeen’. However in this study the term is linked to the idea of a primary school population which basically includes children from class one to eight.

### **Children’s literature**

The term applies to Literature that is accessible and comprehensible to children in both its techniques and themes. The study however recognizes that the term ‘children’s literature’ can sometimes be stretched to include works that are outside literary fields.

### **Kenyan children’s literature**

It is that kind of Literature that is addressed to the Kenyan child or is a direct result of exposure to the Kenyan experience.

### **Integrated Syllabus**

The term refers to a course in which normally separate subject components are brought together and taught in a coherent way.

### **Integrated Kiswahili language and Children’s literature**

The term refers to the new syllabus for Kiswahili designed for the primary schools in Kenya. It recommended the teaching of Kiswahili language and children’ literature as one subject

### **Mother Tongue**

In this study it refers to the use of African languages like Luhyia, Kikuyu, Kiswahili, etc.

**Language of instruction**

It is the language that is used for the purpose of imparting knowledge in an educational system in this case in primary school.



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# **1 Introduction to the study**

One of the aims of teaching Kiswahili as a subject in primary schools in Kenya since it was made a compulsory and examinable subject in 1981 was and still is to inculcate the habit of reading among pupils and at the same time to create and promote a positive attitude towards Kiswahili as the national language. However, it was not until 2002 that children's literature in Kiswahili was integrated into the Kiswahili language syllabus (Ministry of Education 2002).

From an informal discussion with some Kiswahili primary school teachers, it seems that there has been little effort to achieve this goal of nurturing pupils to read and become independent readers despite the fact that the government of Kenya has been greatly involved in the provision of reading material since 2003 and the restructuring of the Kiswahili curriculum which aims at improving the teaching of reading, writing, listening and speaking among school going children.

In addition, it has been observed that a growing number of pupils in Kenya do not have the urge to read storybooks for leisure. Most pupils tend to read only to pass examinations and read little else besides the prescribed textbooks. The problem seems to arise from the fact that the purpose of integrating children's literature in Kiswahili is not made clear to the Kiswahili teachers and even to the pupils themselves and the community at large. This is also attributed to the fact that the provision of supplementary books is stifled by head teachers' preference of textbooks.

The inclusion of literature in the school curriculum is pegged on the recognition of the importance of literature to the social, cultural and moral life of a society. Literature is embedded in the life of all people, whether schooled or unschooled, for it comprises not only the written texts but also the riches of a community's oral traditions such as songs, proverbs, tongue twisters, stories and folklore which everybody shares (Bakahuuna 2000: 71). Bakahuuna (2000: 71) observes that the theme of literature is the life in all its aspects, and its sub-themes are such universal issues as culture, birth, death and love. Through these themes then, literature exposes readers to many different cultural activities, norms, aspirations, pitfalls and the whole range of human relations. In addition, Bakahuuna (*ibid*)



points out that literature is language, that is, the use of adaptation, enhancement and even violation of language for the purposes of assimilating, interpreting and building on the delights and horrors of human experience. Therefore, one can argue that the importance of literature to society and to the individual is well established, and so is the claim that it is crucial to the education curriculum. It is therefore necessary that it should be taught right from primary school level.

The role of children's literature in general can be redefined in the light of the six national goals for education (Republic of Kenya 1981). These goals are stated as follows:

1. To foster nationalism, patriotism and promote national unity: This implies that education in Kenya must foster a sense of national hood and promote national unity. It also means that there is need to integrate Kenya's various ethnic and religious groups to form one nation; there is need to integrate its social classes, by reducing the gap between the elites and the masses; it is the paramount duty of education to help young people acquire this sense of nationhood by removing conflicts and promoting positive attitudes of mutual respect which will enable them to live together in harmony and to make a positive contribution to the national life.
2. To promote the social, economic, technological and industrial needs for national development: Education in Kenya should prepare the youth of the county to play an effective and productive role in the life of the nation. The achievement of this goal rests on the development of the pupil's cognitive, affective and psychomotor faculties (Otim 2000: 79), so that they can acquire productive skills required to support Kenya's modern and independent economy. At the social level, education in Kenya must prepare children for those changes in attitudes and relationships which are necessary for the smooth progress of a rapidly developing modern country. There is need to foster in the country's youth an inquiring attitude towards traditionally established values. Kenyan children should be able to blend the best of the traditional values with the innovations and changed attitudes which always follow rapid development.
3. To promote individual development and self-fulfilment: Education should provide opportunities for the fullest development of individual talents and personality. It should help every child to develop his/her potential interests and abilities. A vital

aspect of individual development is character building. Education should foster moral, ethical and religious values in order to help the child grow up into a self-disciplined, self-reliant and integrated citizen. These values include: honesty, responsibility, and integrity, accountability, a love for productive and constructive work and respect for other people.

4. To promote social equality and responsibility: Education should promote social equality and bring about a sense of social responsibility within an educational system which provides equal educational opportunities for all. It should give the child varied and challenging opportunities for collective activities and corporate social service irrespective of gender, ability or geographical environment.
5. To promote respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures: Education should respect, foster and develop Kenya's rich and varied cultures. It should instil in the youth of Kenya an understanding of past and present cultural values and their valid place in contemporary society, as well as a sense of respect for unfamiliar cultures.
6. To promote international consciousness: Education should foster positive attitudes towards other countries and towards the international community of which Kenya is a part. Her people live within the complicated and independent networks of peoples and nations. Education should therefore, lead the young people to accept membership in this international community with all the obligations and responsibilities, rights and benefits that this entails.

Having considered the educational objectives in relation to literature in general and to children's literature in particular, one is bound to ask, what then should be the focus?

Children's literature in Kiswahili then ought to empower pupils in primary schools with skills needed to help the nation achieve these goals. Developing language skills should be among the first achievements. These skills include reading, writing, listening and speaking. As Otim (2000: 79) points out, "Literature will increase all language skills because it will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary, usage and complex and exact syntax". Therefore children's literature in Kiswahili should be explored for the development of reading. Reading and literature in Kiswahili enhance each

other because, given direct access and encouragement, learners will be motivated enough to enjoy reading thus cultivating a habit of reading for pleasure.

Helping pupils study literature also calls for and develops cognitive skills at various levels; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Otim 2000: 79). Literature also develops affective skills, requiring the perception and expression of emotions, cultivation of interest as well as empathy and judgment of values (Bakuhuuna 2000: 71). Other skills that pupils acquire through learning literature entail reciting, acting, dancing and singing. Through an enhanced understanding of human relationships that is acquired through literature, it teaches social skills that enable one to fit in the community.

As stated in the objectives for teaching Kiswahili language (Ministry of Education 2002: 126), children's literature can be used as an excellent vehicle for imparting and developing fundamental values such as creating awareness of human rights, social ills in the society and how they can be tackled, appreciation of social equity and democratic participation in decision making, understanding and tolerance of cultural differences and pluralism, compassion, cooperation and a spirit of caring; enterprise, creativity and open-mindedness to change.

As observed rightly by Otim (2000: 79) learners should not merely perceive but fully absorb the relationship between literature and society so that their reading of literature texts can help them in seeing, understanding, solving personal, societal and national problems as they grow. Hence the reading material offered should have an application for the pupil and society. This will also go a long way in helping learners to develop an appreciation for literature while still growing up.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, one of the objectives of teaching Kiswahili language in primary schools in Kenya is to encourage the development of a reading culture and create a positive attitude towards Kiswahili as the national language. Since the inclusion of children's literature in the syllabus should serve pedagogical, cultural and economic purposes, it should be of necessity to be interested in whether these objectives are being achieved. This research therefore sought to examine and describe the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenyan primary schools by focusing on the reading habits of pupils at school and at home. The aim was to find out to what extent pupils have

cultivated the habit of reading for leisure and how they have been encouraged to do so by the relevant stakeholders who include head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and parents.

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study. The chapter focuses on the demographic set-up of the study, an overview of language situation in Kenya, the choice of Kiswahili as the national language and the free primary education in Kenya. This is followed by a discussion on the development of primary education and language in education policies in Kenya in order to place the current situation into perspective. In addition it presents a discussion on mother tongue education in Kenya, *Sheng* and its impact on Kiswahili and the concept of children's literature. Also in the chapter is a discussion on the integration of Kiswahili language and children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya. The chapter also outlines the research problem, objectives of the study, research questions, rationale of the study, and the scope of the study and literature review.

Chapter two presents an overview of the growth and development of children's literature in Kenya by focusing on three historical periods that have impacted on its growth. They include: the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods.

Chapter three outlines the theoretical frameworks upon which the study is based. The study relied on a combination of theories: Cognitive Development theory by Jean Piaget (1950). This is in view of the fact that, the literary competence of any child depends on his or her cognitive development and other factors in life. Cognitive Development theory is very helpful in helping us to understand the process of growth and changes that take place in the child and young people. Social Learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977) helps us to understand how the environment shapes the child's reading behaviours. Finally, Reader Response theory (RR) based on Louise Rosenblatt's (1995) 'Transactional Reader Response' approach is applied here in order to understand how children react to the various storybooks they read.

Chapter four focuses on research methodology. It presents an overview of the areas of study, sources of data for the study, which include primary and secondary data, the types of primary schools found in Kenya, the target population, the study sample, the sampling

procedures, the instruments used for data collection, data collection procedure, data analysis and the data presentation.

Chapter five presents the main results obtained in this study. These results are presented in four main sections. The first two sections deal with the data obtained from the head teachers as the managers of schools and the Kiswahili teachers, as the people who impart knowledge to the pupils at school. The third section deals with the pupils who are the focus of the study and the last section discusses the role played by parents in encouraging children to read at home. In chapter six, the summary, conclusions, implications and recommendations which are based on the findings of the study are presented.

## **1.1 Demographic set-up of the study**

Kenya is located in the eastern part of the African continent and covers an area approximately 582,646 square kilometres (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2008). It is bordered by Ethiopia and Sudan to the North, Somalia and Indian Ocean to the East, Uganda to the West, and Tanzania to the South. There are eight provinces in Kenya including Nairobi. These provinces are divided into district administrative units. Each of the districts is further subdivided into small administrative units known as divisions. It is only recently that Nairobi was divided into districts but before this, it was divided into divisions. The data for this study is based on two of the provinces, Nairobi and Western provinces. Within the Western province region, the study focused on Lugare district and in Nairobi it focused on all the eight divisions.

Kenya's population is approximated to be over 37 million with an annual growth rate of 3% (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2008). 44% of the population is below the age of 15 years (Kenya National Human Development report 2006). This is the age that this study focuses on because it is the age that primarily reads children and young peoples' books. According to the Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey report of 2007, 62 per cent of the adult population has attained functional literacy levels (Ministry of Education 2008: xi). The Kenyan education system consists of eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education popularly referred to as 8-4-4 system. The official age range for primary school is 6-14 years (Ministry of Education

2008: 6). According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2008), the primary education enrolment rate was 8 million pupils by the year 2007.

## **1.2 Overview of language situation in Kenya**

The number of indigenous languages spoken in Kenya has varied and range from 30 (Heine & Möhlig 1980: 10), 34 (Whitely 1974: 27) 40 (Mbaabu 1996: 6) and 61 (Gordon 2005: 1). This variation is attributed to the variability of the two related terms: language and dialect. It has not been easy to make a distinction between language and dialect. This is because the criterion of mutual intelligibility that is used to distinguish dialects from language does not seem adequate since it admits degrees of intelligibility that can vary greatly (Ogechi 2002a: 1, Myers-Scotton 1995: 9). What might be called a dialect, for instance, Bukusu, may at the same time be called a language (c.f. Gordon 2005). Another reason could be due to certain groups of minority speakers in a larger community wanting to assert themselves as independent groups linguistically. For instance, Suba has been considered as a dialect of the Luo language for a long time but more recently Suba is now considered as a language (Ogone 2008: 250). This recognition of Suba as a language and many others has increased the number of languages in Kenya. However, the Republic of Kenya (1999) puts the number of ethnic languages spoken in Kenya at 40. Three percent of the population consists of descendants of immigrants from Asia, Europe and elsewhere (Nzomo et al 2001: 1).

The various indigenous languages in Kenya belong to one of the language phyla genetically defined as: Niger Congo, Nilo Saharan and Afro Asiatic. In specific Kenyan languages can be grouped as follows: Bantu languages as a sub-branch of Niger-Congo, Nilotic as a branch of Nilo-Saharan and Cushitic as a branch of Afro-Asiatic (Heine & Möhlig 1980: 10). Roughly, 66% of the population speaks a Bantu language. About 30% speaks Nilotic and 3% speaks Cushitic languages and the rest of the population speaks languages of the Indian sub-continent (Gorman 1974: 398). Within these language types, one finds a small number of large ethno-linguistic groups. Each of this language group has more than one million speakers and is mainly spoken in particular areas.

In addition to being Kenya's predominant language group, Bantu languages are spoken throughout Central, Southern and Western Africa. Kenya's Bantu speakers are commonly

divided into three groups: Western, (Luhya, Gusii, Suba, and Kuria), Central (Kamba, Embu, Gikuyu, Chuka, Meru-Tharaka, Igoji and Nithi), Coastal (Ilwana, Miji Kenda, Taveta, Bajun, Pokomo, Taita and Swahili). Cushitic speakers except for the Gushe and some hunting group are pastoralists who speak Somali and Galla. The only Nilo-Saharan language spoken in Kenya is Dholuo. Other Nilotic languages are spoken in Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. The Nilotic languages are divided into three groups: Teso (Iteso, Turkana), Masai (Masai, Samburu, and Njembs) and Kalenjins (Nandi, Kipsigis, Elgeyo, Sabot, Marakwet, Tugen, Terik, and Pokot) (Whitely 1974: 27, Myers-Scotton 1995: 19, Heine & Möhlig 1980: 14-15). While within each group some of the languages are mutually intelligible or at least learned by speakers of other languages, there is no intelligibility across group boundaries, the languages being totally different (Mbaabu 1996: 47). Although orthographies have been devised for most of the languages, written literature in them is quite scanty.

The major six ethnic groups in Kenya are; Kikuyu (21%), Luhya (14%), Luo (12%), Akamba (11%), Kalenjini (11%) and the Abagusii 6% (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2008).

English is the official language in Kenya. As an official language, it is used in parliament and government offices, business and commerce, the mass media and external communication. The mass media of the country especially the print media rely heavily on the use of English (Pawlitzy 2005: 7). Since the colonial days, English language has been an important part of the school curriculum and it has up to date remained a core subject in Kenyan schools. It is the medium of instruction from class four in primary school, secondary, post primary up to the higher institution of learning in the country. While the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community is used for instruction in the first three grades of primary education. In most cases English is associated with formal public interactions, hence not used much in informal situations.

Kiswahili is the lingua franca and the national language of Kenya. As a national language, Kiswahili is regarded as a major language arising from its widespread usage thus it is widely understood by most Kenyans who speak different indigenous languages. It is a compulsory and examinable language in primary and secondary schools in Kenya (Mbaabu 1996: 131). It is also used as a medium of instruction in areas where the communities living

in a certain area are linguistically heterogeneous. In all schools, there is a subject lesson in Kiswahili and in English per day. In addition, all departments of Kiswahili in all Kenyan public universities use Kiswahili as the language of instruction in all its courses and meetings. In addition, languages such as German, French, Arabic and Japanese are taught in a number of schools, colleges and universities.

### **1.3 The choice of Kiswahili as a national language in Kenya**

As a first language, Kiswahili is spoken along the East African coast; along the Kenyan coast up to the southern Tanzanian coast. It is the mother tongue of various offshore islands, most prominently Lamu in the far north and Mafia (Kilwa) in the far south, with Zanzibar and Pemba in between (Myers-Scotton 1995: 24).

Living on the coast, the Swahili came in contact with Arab sailors and traders. From the Arabs they borrowed some cultural features as well as vocabulary. In addition, there was a lot of intermarriage between the Swahili and the Arabs. The results is that Swahili native speakers have a way of life and a physical appearance that is different from inland East African groups (Nurse & Hinnesbusch 1993: 309).

According to Polome (Quoted in Mohamed 2001: introduction), by the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kiswahili had become a well established language. Kiswahili had expanded as a result of contact with Arabs, Portuguese, Indian, British and German traders and Colonizers (Whitely 1974: 42). It is because of the spread of Kiswahili along the trade route into the interior that some of the European missionaries played a prominent role in encouraging its use. They went as far as advocating its use in spreading the gospel on the grounds that it was a highly developed language with a literary tradition and had been used for spiritual purposes in the teaching of Kiswahili (Bunyi 1996: 35). This further enhanced the spread of Kiswahili.

Some of the missionaries attempted to produce dictionaries and grammars (Mohamed 2001: introduction). For instance, missionaries such as Bishop Steers, the Reverend Kraph and Father Secleux were notable Kiswahili scholars who contributed to the latinisation of Kiswahili (Gorman 1974: 404, Myers-Scotton 1995: 26). In 1928, a standardized version of Kiswahili based on the Zanzibar dialect was produced (Myers-Scotton 1995: 27). From this



period onwards Kiswahili became widespread and was used as a language of communication between speakers of different indigenous languages.

While its native speakers were few, more people began to speak it as a second language. This was due to diverse historical circumstances that created a need for a lingua franca in the interior East Africa (Myers-Scotton 1995: 25). As already mentioned early, it was used in trade, missionary activities and for the colonial governments and finally it was used as the vehicle of nationalist mobilization in the push for independence after the Second World War. However, the use of Kiswahili waned in Kenya in 1950s, when it was stopped from being used in schools due to the official policy that was in operation at that time.

According to Gorman (1974: 445), the prominence of Kiswahili as a national language increased after Kenyan independence in December 1964. From then it was considered as a major language of national communication. The parliamentary celebration of independence was occasioned by a speech in Kiswahili by President Kenyatta. It was on that occasion that a prominent member of parliament, Dr Munyua Waiyaki commented:

*There is no question now of deciding whether or not Kiswahili will become the national language. The President of the Republic has decided for us and we are committed to accept Swahili as the national language (Gorman 1974: 446).*

However, Kiswahili was only declared officially as a national language in 1974, ten years after independence (Bogonko 1992: 241) despite these overtones that aspired to make it the national language from the onset. None the less, the powerful institution of the presidency brought about the noteworthy changes in the national language.

Unfortunately, in spite of this declaration that was made in 1974, no resources were allocated to effect the changes by coming up with a comprehensive policy for teaching the language effectively nor were attempts made to come to terms with the social forces that had a stake in using English (Bogonko 1992: 241). Although Kiswahili was supposedly taught in all tiers of education, the fact that it could not be examined in primary education rendered its teaching difficult thus Kiswahili was not popularized in the country. For instance, not much was done in terms of strict allocation of time, provision of instructional materials and provision of qualified teachers who could handle the language effectively.

In 1981, the fortunes of Kiswahili were revamped when it was made a compulsory and examinable language (Republic of Kenya 1981). This was after it had been observed that there were many university graduates who could not communicate in the national language (Mbaabu 1996: 131). This made it impossible for the graduates to pass on the knowledge and skills acquired to the general population that does not understand English. Kiswahili as the national language is spoken by about 65% (Heine & Möhlig 1980: 61) to 80% (Momanyi 2007: 6) of the national population, whereas not more than 5 % can be considered as having competence in English (Kembo-Sure 1991 quoted in Adegbiya 1994: 50). In most cases English is never used in most homes (See findings in this study 5.4.2.10). English is regarded as a classroom language by a majority of people. This means therefore that English is used only by a minority elite group and that Kiswahili is the language of the majority in Kenya. As rightly observed by Ryanga (2001: 24) Kiswahili is now prevalent upcountry and has penetrated the villages. This is because with the current system of education, any person from any ethnic group who has been educated up to the level of class eight and who has not relapsed into illiteracy is capable of reading Kiswahili.

Kiswahili can be characterized as a language of wider communication or an international language since it is spoken by more than eighty million people in fourteen nations in East and Central Africa (Masato quoted in Brock-Utne 2005: 52). In addition Kiswahili has been adopted as one of the five official languages of the African Union along with English, Portuguese and Arabic (Brock-Utne 2005: 52).

Nonetheless, Kiswahili has been favoured as a national language by policy makers. A variety of reasons have been advanced for this choice:

- In a country such as Kenya, with many ethnic groups, it would be unfair and impolitic to select the language of any one of the major languages spoken in the country as the official national language. To do so would confer undue advantage on its native speakers. Kiswahili is perceived to be a language of fairly neutral status, in terms of ethnic affiliation (Onyango 2003: 54).
- Kiswahili is an international language spoken in most of East and Central Africa. As such it can link Kenya with its neighbours (Chimera 2000: 3).

- Kiswahili has a rich and diverse literature that can be used as a basis for widespread literacy for all levels of the education system (Kasozi 2000: 24).

Presently, Kiswahili is used along with English in parliament and churches. In addition most radio stations within and outside Kenya and television stations air most of their programmes in Kiswahili. Kiswahili is also used in most public service documents such as application forms for passports and identity cards. It is also taught in all primary teacher training colleges, diploma colleges and in all of the seven public and private universities in Kenya. Kiswahili is taught as a foreign language subject in approximately one hundred universities across the United States of America and other countries (Chimera 2002: 30). Other advances made in Kiswahili include the updated Kiswahili-Kiswahili Dictionary. The dictionary was the brain child of the Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es salaam, and it included scholars from a cross-section of the Kiswahili speaking region (Mbaabu 1996: 190).

During the president's address to the public on national days, the president reads his speech in English and later gives a summary of the speech in Kiswahili. This elevates the language and gives it a national status. As a national language, Kiswahili has the distinct position of promoting a sense of national identity for many Kenyans. Speaking and writing in Kiswahili has become symbolic of an individual's membership in the Kenyan republic.

In addition, the public awareness of Kiswahili continues to be attracted by various events which highlight its role and use at national and international level. For instance, The Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature which was launched in 1974 set aside a category for books written in Kiswahili and since then a number of Kiswahili books have won this prestigious award. The children's category for the same literary award in Kiswahili was launched in 2003. Accordingly, conferences like those convened by *Chama Cha Kiswahili* (Kiswahili Association) at regular intervals contribute a lot to discussions of achievements and problems in introducing Kiswahili in spheres where English has been dominant. They also propagate new research data and findings in corpus planning with particular reference to lexical elaboration. The Kiswahili Association has moved further and published three journals emanating from the conference deliberations (Njogu 2007: i).

Indeed Kiswahili has had to struggle to arrive at the level at which it has reached despite the negative attitude towards its use for a long time. For, while it is viewed favourably as

the national language, on the other hand, Kiswahili has been associated with low education while English is associated with high education in most cases (Onyango 2003: 61).

## **1.4 Free primary education in Kenya**

This section sets the background of the study by focusing on primary education and the intervention of the Kenyan government in making sure that all children in Kenya benefit from education through free primary education and the provision of textbooks and other reading materials. This is relevant to this study in that the education system is an important factor to be considered in relation to children's literature and the reading habits of children.

Primary education is defined as the stage of education in which all children are taught what they need to know, in order to be fully human beings in the world in which they are growing up (Ryanga 1994: 20). Primary education is considered of great importance because of its wide range of benefits. These include: the shaping and strengthening of the child as an individual in relation to his or her fellow pupils, to nature and to the world as an environment. Primary education is thought also to build a capacity for life-learning in individuals and in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes which will contribute to the general development of the community in which individuals live by meeting manpower needs and improving community life (Taylor & Muhall 1997: 1). All in all educators tend to see the primary school as an institution for fostering the physical, emotional and social development of the children attending school.

Since independence, one of the most important government aims in primary education in Kenya has been to provide literacy, numeracy and manipulation skills as well as positive social attitudes and values which make life worthwhile in modern society (Bogonko 1992: 110). In essence primary education is the bedrock of education in Kenya's formal education system. It is the foundation upon which are built the other higher structures of modern education and training system. This stage of development is crucial for the development of future adult citizens. It is for this reasons that the government of Kenya has been aiming at the attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in order to prepare its citizen to play their full role in developing the country.

Additionally, primary education is expected to regenerate African culture and enable school pupils to appreciate their own culture without discarding knowledge of other cultures. Culture according to UNESCO (2002: 12) is:

*the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterizes a society, or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.*

Hence, change of the syllabus at the primary level to include children's literature. This is aimed at developing and creating awareness, understanding and appreciation of the pupils' culture and the culture of other people. Furthermore, primary education is supposed to develop not only a measure of logical thought and critical judgment, but also self expression, self discipline, full utilization of one's senses and growth towards maturity and self fulfilment (Bogonko 1992: 111). It is also the objective of primary education, too, to develop the whole person as a useful and well-adjusted member of society, including the physical, mental and spiritual capacities.

The right to education is well established (UNESCO 2002). For instance, Article 26 of the universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) declared that elementary education shall be compulsory. The intrinsic human value of education, that is, its ability to add meaning and value to everyone's life without discrimination is at the core of its status as a human right (UNESCO 2002). It is in line with this statement that goal four of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to achieve universal primary education. The target is to ensure that by the year 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary school. Indeed for the goal to be attained, the child has to be put at the centre of implementation. In essence, the strategy for the universal education is meant to access free education to the poor in society thus increasing the literacy rate of the country.

The objective of universal education is towards which many less developed countries have been striving to achieve (Bogonko 1992: 114). During the 1960's a series of meetings convened by UNESCO set target dates for achieving universal, compulsory and free education on a continent-wide basis. The year 1970 was the objective adopted for Latin American countries at the Santiago conference, and 1980 became the target for Asian

countries at Karachi conference 1960. 1966 was the agreed year for Arabic countries at the Tripoli conference, and Africa's target was set as 1980, at the Addis Ababa conference (Bogonko 1992: 114, Bray 1982: 1). Indeed there were positive results in Kenya in that by 1982, Kenya had virtually attained Universal Primary Education (Bogonko 1992: 116).

Despite considerable efforts made by the government to achieve the goal, it proved difficult for the government to continue supporting the programme and thus the responsibility of primary education was relegated to parents (Boyle 1999: 149). In 1983 it was declared that parents would buy textbooks, exercise books and other writing and reading materials for their children as well as to equip their schools (Nzomo et al 2001: 3). This made it impossible for many parents to take their children to school, hence the number of children who dropped out of school increased.

Nevertheless, universal education still remains a declared objective all over the world. This objective was again strongly articulated at the first world conference on Education for All in Jomtien in 1990. It was reaffirmed by the World Education Forum meeting in Dakar in 2000. Delegates at the latter meeting declared that by 2015, all children of primary age would participate in free schooling of acceptable quality (UNESCO 2002: 1).

In recognition of the Millennium Development Goals and to underscore the value of basic education, the government of Kenya re-introduced free primary education in the year 2003 as a commitment to achieving Free and Universal Primary Education at the same time aiming at promoting literacy in Kenya (Ministry of Education 2004: 1). The government has put in place a policy framework and appropriate legislation that ensures provision of education to all children regardless of their circumstances. Key among them is the children's Act of 2001 that provides for education as a right to all children. The government is also a signatory to International declarations and protocols which is a commitment to providing education to all its citizens (Ministry of Education 2004: 14).

The primary aim is therefore to teach children, how to read and write. Therefore, in 2003 public primary schooling became free of charge, and attempts were made to enrol as many children as possible. The re-introduction of free primary education saw an additional of over one million children who had previously been excluded from the system enrolled in

schools. This increased the number of children in primary school to over eight million (Republic of Kenya 2007: 16).

The government of Kenya took over the responsibility of providing textbooks and other reading materials including supplementary reading books to all its 18,901 public primary schools (Sifuna 2005: 1). The goal is to have one text book for every three pupils and one storybook in each of the official languages of the school thus English and Kiswahili, for every two pupils. The storybooks aim at helping the pupils reinforce what they learn at school and instil in them a culture of reading. This has hopefully made it possible for every child to have access to various types of books that a school can buy. The allocation of funds is based on the number of pupils in a school (Ministry of Education 2004: 1).

With the financial support from the government, publishing of textbooks and storybooks for children and especially in Kiswahili has seen tremendous growth since 2003. The critical role which textbooks and other reading materials play in education in developing nations is well documented (UNICEF 1984: 23). Textbooks and other reading materials are the instruments for self-learning both in and out of school, and to a considerable degree, can compensate for constraints in the learning environment. The World Bank's education sector policy asserts that the availability of textbooks and other reading materials has been found to be the most consistently positive determinants of academic achievement (World Bank quoted in UNICEF 1984: 23). In order to achieve quality basic education, there is need for development of good reading habits of children right from primary school level.

Other than the provision of free primary education, the Ministry of Education through the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) formulated a new syllabus in Kiswahili language in 2002. The Kenya Institute of Education is responsible for the production of teaching syllabi for both primary and secondary schools and teacher training colleges. One of the changes made to the Kiswahili syllabus was the integration of Kiswahili language and children's literature from class one to class eight at the primary level and also at the secondary level. This was one way of emphasizing the relatedness of language and literature. Pupils are supposed to be taught all the genres of literature that include traditional stories with the subgenres of fables, folktales, myths, legends, riddles, proverbs and folk epic, poetry and different types of fiction with subgenres of realism, historical realism together with fantasy stories with its subgenres of fantastic stories and science fiction (Ministry of Education

2002). In addition, there is emphasis on creating awareness of the emerging issues in the society through storybooks. These include issues such as, children's right, child abuse, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and gender issues among others.

It is in line with the provision of reading materials and in particular storybooks written in Kiswahili and the change of the Kiswahili syllabus that this study set out to examine and describe the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools by focusing on the reading habits of pupils and the role played by head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and parents in enhancing and maintaining of reading habits among pupils both at school and at home. For the purpose of this study, we take it that the pupils under study have already mastered the rudimentary mechanics of reading and therefore, the study will concentrate on reading for leisure.

## **1.5 Primary education and language policy in education**

The aim of this section is to first, highlight the development of primary education in Kenya and secondly to focus on various language in education policies that have been put in place since the introduction of formal education in the country. These two aspects will lead to the understanding of the present state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya because the development of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenya has been greatly affected by the education systems and language policies that have been in place in the country since the colonial period. This means that these language policies will have an implication on the language in which storybooks are written. In addition, the section also focuses on mother tongue education and the use of *Sheng* and its impact on Kiswahili language. The mother tongue and *Sheng* aspects are presented in relation to their use and effect on the official languages of the school both at school and at home.

### **1.5.1 Primary education before independence**

Formal education in Kenya started in the first decades of the nineteenth century and the following period through the activities of different missionary societies such as the Missionary Society, the University Mission to Central Africa, the White Fathers and the London Missionary Society (Azevedo & Dupree 1993: 158). These missionaries opened,



managed and in many cases financed primary schools for indigenous population with the main objective of converting Africans to Christianity (Gorman 1974: 403, Boyle 1999: 14).

John Kraph and Johan Rebman are some of the known missionaries who arrived in Kenya in 1844 and 1846 respectively. They opened schools for the sons of chiefs at Rabai near Mombasa for the Anglican Church Missionary society. They later translated the Bible into Kiswahili and wrote a number of articles on Kiswahili language using the Roman script. These included *Outline of Elements of Swahili language with special reference to the Kinika Dialect* (1850) and *A Dictionary of Swahili Language* (1882) (Gorman 1974: 405). Expansion of schools in to the interior followed after the completion of the railway line which made the interior more accessible (Gorman 1974: 404, Eshiwani 1993: 15). As a result, many European and American mission centres were opened in the interior of the colony with some spreading to the western part of the country.

Since a major aim of missionary education was the conversion of souls, reading and writing were therefore important elements of the curriculum so that students could read the scriptures for themselves and for others and thus enhance the spread of the gospel (Adegbija 1994: 32). In addition, manual skills such as rudimentary agriculture were taught for the purpose of making mission centres self-sustaining (Bunyi 1996: 29). With time the mission schools introduced more practical subjects to meet the needs of the colonial administrators, the white settlers and the commercial leaders for skilled labour and artisans. It was not until 1922, that the British government assumed greater responsibility for education in Kenya (Gorman 1974: 406).

Colonial government involvement in education was gradual and for many years it took the form of government cooperation with missionaries. However, in 1911 a department of education under Mr. J.R. Orr, was established to look after the education of European children. Following the recommendations of the colonial government advisor, Mr Nelson Frazer, racial segregation was introduced in education (Bunyi 1996: 30). This resulted into the formation of four racial stratifications in the education system: Europeans, Indians, Arabs and Africans (Bunyi 1996: 30). The quantity and quality of education provided reflected these social stratifications.

Each race had its own system of education for the principle underlying colonial education was to distinguish between the education of the ruled and that of the rulers (Bogonko 1992:

24). The European child received an academic British education in preparation for an English university education. The Indian child received higher forms of vocational training aimed at preparing them to become technicians, technologist and engineers, while African children received an industrial education in preparation for labour to support the colonial system (Kerr 1991: 20).

The administration of education system was dominated by expatriates, as was the teaching. More over, access to education was quite limited to African children. In most cases, African schools ended in class three or four (Bogonko 1992: 24), while the European and Asian primary lasted seven years. The final year in the European and Asian schools was a preparatory time for secondary school education (Eshiwani 1993: 33). Hence, few Africans went up the education ladder (Azevedo & Dupree 1993: 160). This means that illiteracy and rate of relapsing into it were very high. This was one of the reasons that created conflicts between Africans and colonialists.

The pre-independence period was characterized by imported text-books and other reading materials. As observed by Otim (2000: 77), “The colonial education authorities never had a written teaching syllabus but simply issued a list of books to be used in schools.” Again examinations were set and marked externally at Cambridge in the United Kingdom. The consequence was that the curricula served the needs of a minority; it was subject-centred and hence produced people with higher pro-former qualifications for a few white-collar jobs (Eshiwani 1993: 157).

There also emerged a pattern of unequal distribution of educational opportunities. This was because the provision of education depended on local receptivity and demand, missionary thrust and competitiveness of sphere of influence (Bogonko 1992: 22). Hence, the bigger number of primary schools in Central and Nyanza provinces vis-à-vis those in the Rift valley, Coast and Northern provinces of Kenya by the time of independence.

However, the colonial government set out to bridge the gap by starting schools in those areas that had been neglected by missions. They provided technically-oriented and inexpensive manpower to fill low-level jobs in the civil service. Where both the missions and government failed to meet African aspirations, Africans established their own schools

from the beginning of the 1920 as either independent or as African local authority schools (Bogonko 1992: 22). This shows that many Africans aspired to become literate.

At the end of the Second World War, and because of the rise in prominence of many young Africans who gained experience and responsibility through their participation in the colonial war effort, new demands for institutions of higher education open to the indigenous population found their voice into the local press. The new elites gave voice to their rejection of the duality in African primary school (and even secondary) system, most of which excluded Africans from enrolling in institutions with a European curriculum (Eshiwani 1993: 33).

### **1.5.2 Language policy in primary school before independence**

When the missionaries set up schools in the country, initially they preferred to teach almost all subjects of the curriculum, except English language in the languages of the indigenous, known as vernaculars or mother tongue in lower grades. Religion particularly was to be taught and spread in the indigenous languages which were thought to have some emotional appeal among speakers. Later on, Kiswahili was preferred as the medium of instruction in upper grades of primary school. By then, Kiswahili was a language that cut across ethnic boundaries due to the fact that it had greatly spread in the country (Gorman 1974: 399, Chimera 2002: 49).

During the following years of the British colonial rule, language policy was a context field. Language issues in education in Kenya were first raised by the missionary orders in 1909 at the United Missionary Conference (Njoroge 1990: 258). During these debates, there were those who supported exposing Africans to the English language on one hand, and on the other hand, there were those who were opposed to Africans learning English.

Subsequently, a multitude of language policy statements were made by a variety of bodies: Conferences, Committees, Commissions, Appointed Linguistic Advisors, Study Groups, the Legislative Council and Government Memoranda (c.f. Gorman 1974).

Based on the recommendation of these bodies, language policy as regards English, Kiswahili and mother tongue, and the concomitant teaching of and in the various languages was articulated. Represented in such discussions were the interests of three groups of people; the colonial officers in London who were interested in the effective administration

of the British East Africa; the colonial civil servants in Kenya who were interested in effective communication of colonial policies and authority; the missionaries, whose major goal was evangelization and the white farmers and business people who were chiefly interested in cheap labour force (Bunyi 1996: 33). What is noticeable at that time is that there was no single policy which was pursued over any length of time in any large area.

Some administrative officers such as the Provincial Commissioner, C. Hobley supported the teaching of Kiswahili and English in the upper primary school. On the other hand, the Protestant missionaries and the Roman Catholic missionaries favoured the teaching of Kiswahili rather than English (Gorman 1974: 406). Others like, Mr. J.R. Orr who was the Director of Education, felt that teaching of Kiswahili was a waste of time and supported teaching in the indigenous languages (Gorman 1974: 406). None the less, the position of Kiswahili remained significant in education.

Earlier on, a concern had been raised against the colonial policy of denying Africans their language by the Phelps-Stokes commission of the United States which visited many African countries south of the Sahara between 1920 and 1921 and again in 1924 (Adegbija 1994: 32). The Phelps-Stokes commission's report, recognized that, "...in the past practically all the colonizing nations in Africa had forced their languages upon the people and discouraged the use of vernaculars, as had often been done by dominant groups in Europe" (quoted in Spencer 1974: 165). They regarded such policies as unwise and unjust. The commission then recommended the use of the vernaculars wherever possible in the early years of primary education and English in secondary education (Adegbija 1994: 32). In Kenya, the Phelps-Stokes commission recommended the use of four languages, namely Kiswahili, Kikuyu, and Luo as well as Nandi (Mbaabu 1996: 62). These languages were to be used in the initial stages of education whereby English would be used in the higher levels.

All those participating in language policy decisions at the time agreed that education in the indigenous language should be the norm in the first years of primary school (Adegbija 1994: 32). The principle that, 'on education grounds, the language known and understood by the child on starting school was the most effective medium in the early years of education' held sway among educators in the first decades of the twentieth century (Spencer 1974: 168). This principle was endorsed by the council of the Inter-national

African Institute in 1930, when it agreed that, “It is a universally acknowledged principle in modern education that a child should receive instruction both in and through his mother tongue, and this privilege should not be withheld from the African child” (cited in Spencer 1974: 168).

In response to this criticism, some African languages were introduced in the education systems of the colonies. The mother tongue principle was well accepted by quite a number of people, for it was in line with their interests. For instance, the missionary interests of proselytisation were well served. The principle was in line with the Livingstonian principle, which missionary educators in East Africa upheld (Bunyi 1996: 33). The Livingstonian principle held that Africa would only be converted by Africans (Gorman 1974: 404). Education in the indigenous language meant that graduates of mission schools could read the scriptures for themselves and for others. In the end, more souls would be won (Ngugi 1981: 63).

The mother tongue principle and practice was also in line with the philosophy of British colonial rule which, unlike the French colonial policy of assimilationist was separatist (Awoniyi 1976: 31, Bunyi 1996: 33). In tune with the French colonial policy of assimilation, education was used as the process through which Africans were taught that the French way of life, culture and values were better than African ideals learned through traditional education. The assimilation philosophy espoused the idea that ultimately those colonized people who would achieve a certain level of cultural similarity with the colonizer would be integrated into the culture of the colonizers (Awoniyi 1976: 31).

The separatist philosophy on the other hand, espoused the idea that the colonizer and the colonized would proceed along different development paths and therefore there would always be a gap between the two. This meant that by Africans learning their own languages and in their own languages they would keep their place. The mother tongue principle was in line with the interest of the white settlers in Kenya. The white settlers saw Africans only as a source of manual labour and consequently were of the opinion that if they must be given education, then it must be labour-oriented and in the indigenous languages (Bunyi 1996: 33).

In essence, the place of the vernacular and English in the education system had been articulated. Thus the vernacular was to be used in the first stages of education and English

was to be used in the higher stages. However, the place of Kiswahili was not clearly articulated as to where it was to be brought in and what role it was to play was the question (Gorman 1974: 416).

Kiswahili had expanded as a result of contact with Arabs, Portuguese, Indians, British and Germans, missionaries, traders and colonizers (Whitely 1969: 42). According to Polome (Quoted in Mohamed 2001: introduction), by the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Kiswahili had become a well established language. Once Kiswahili was well established a long the trade routes, European missionaries played a prominent role in encouraging its use. Some of the missionaries attempted to produce dictionaries and grammars (Mohamed 2001: introduction). For instance, as already mentioned, missionaries such as Bishop Steers, the Reverend Kraph and Father Secleux were notable Kiswahili scholars who contributed to the latinisation of Kiswahili (Gorman 1974: 404, Myers-Scotton 1995: 26). They went as far as advocating its use in spreading the gospel on the grounds that it was a highly developed language with a literary tradition and had been used for spiritual purposes in the teaching of Kiswahili (Bunyi 1996: 35). This further enhanced the spread of Kiswahili.

The efforts to promote Kiswahili by the missionaries can be further explained by the fact that the Universities Mission to Central Africa (U.M.C.A) published the first Kiswahili newspapers, namely *Msimulizi* and *Habari za Mwezi*. The Lutheran church also put emphasis on Kiswahili and used it as a medium of instruction in its schools (Mohamed 2001: introduction). The first children's books mainly Sunday school texts, for example, *Kusoma kwa Watoto kwa siku ya Jumapili* were also produced in 1901 (Alcock 2005: 407).

The question of whether Kiswahili and English should take over from the indigenous languages as a medium of instruction attracted a lot of discussions. Between 1909 and 1940, Kiswahili was widely taught in Kenya both as a subject and as a medium of instruction (Ngugi 1981: 63). This had been a preference of the decision makers such as: the 1909 United Missionary conference in Kenya, the 1927 decision of the Governors of Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya, the 1928 Education conference, and the Kenya Legislative Council in 1929 (Gorman 1974: 413). Around this time, Sir William Gowers, who was Governor from 1925 to 1932 strongly advocated for use of Kiswahili (Kasozi 2000: 24). Gowers and other colonial masters saw Kiswahili as an instrument for merging

Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya. They were therefore in support of Kiswahili language being promoted as the common language throughout the whole of East Africa.

In order to promote Kiswahili on the regional level, Cameron, who was the governor of Tanganyika territory, convened a regional conference to standardise Kiswahili. Because Kiswahili was a regional lingua franca, representatives from Kenya and Uganda also attended the conference (Mbaabu 1996: 63). Thus the inter-territorial Swahili language committee later to be known as East Africa Swahili committee was established in 1930 to look into issues of standardizing Kiswahili since Kiswahili has many dialects.

Other than the standardization of Kiswahili, other objectives of the committee included giving advice to all prospective authors concerning books which they proposed to write and also give encouragement and assistance to authors whose native tongue was Kiswahili (Mbaabu 1996: 70). With their recommendations, storybooks were produced, for example *Lila na Fila* by Kiimbila were some of the stories written and published during this period. The committee also played a leading role in translating in to Kiswahili selected textbooks and general literature from English and compiling dictionaries. Some of the books that were translated, included *King Solomon's Mines* and *Treasure Islands* (Mbaabu 1996: 72). In addition, the committee introduced a Kiswahili essay competition and an authorship competition in order to stimulate the literary gifts of the people (Mbaabu 1996: 73). Many manuscripts were submitted to the committee. This improved the attitude of the people towards reading and writing at the same time increasing interest in Kiswahili. During the Second World War, Kiswahili was taught to the army officers and also to the army schools for army children.

However, there was conflict of attitude towards the spread and use of Kiswahili between and even among the British colonial administration and the missionaries. Some administrators argued that Kiswahili was a viable lingua franca through which to administer British East Africa colonies because it was widely spoken in Tanganyika, some parts of Kenya and a few parts of Uganda (Rubagumya 1990: 7). Other colonial administrators argued that Kiswahili was a second language to virtually all the Africans outside the coastal area and that it was not spoken by a significant number of people in Uganda. This group argued for English to become the lingua franca (Kasozi 2000: 26).

Although most policy statements during this period supported a switch to Kiswahili as the medium of instruction, there were other groups that called for English as medium of instruction and elimination of Kiswahili. The major problem was the insufficient teachers' competence to teach English in primary schools. In addition the supply of vernacular literature was inadequate to take the place of Kiswahili reading materials that were available. However, the 1951 commission on Education in the East African Protectorate recommended that after the initial instruction in the indigenous languages the switch to English should be made both on patriotic and practical grounds (Gorman 1974: 433). The practical grounds had to do with the availability of reading materials in English.

The teaching of and in Kiswahili was not supported by some of the later missionaries for several reasons. Firstly, Kiswahili was closely associated with Islam and Islamic culture (Mbaabu 1996: 95). This meant that accepting Kiswahili would be detrimental to Christianity. Also in the interest of evangelization and reaching the spirituality of the Africans, the missionaries preferred the use of the indigenous languages rather than a lingua franca in this case Kiswahili. They saw Kiswahili as being not fit "to reach the innermost thoughts of those undergoing conversion to Christianity" (cited in Gorman 1974: 404). In Kenya and Uganda, the missionaries were opposed to the use of Kiswahili in schools. This gave a big blow to the development of Kiswahili.

In 1952, the Binns report recommended that Kiswahili should be eliminated except where it was the mother tongue (Chimera 2000: 51). But selected indigenous languages would be preserved. It was deemed necessary to eliminate Kiswahili because it was viewed as an obstacle to teaching important languages to African children, namely, mother tongues and English. But more importantly, it was the colonial government's stubborn resolve to remove Kiswahili on the grounds that it was an interposed language. The recommendations of this report on the language of instruction were fully implemented by the colonial government.

As a result of the new developments, the Inter-territorial language committee was forced to put a halt to its activities of developing Kiswahili because language policy had changed in favour of English and mother tongue (Mbaabu 1996: 77).



Throughout the 1950's, learners in Kenyan primary school were taught in their various mother tongues in the first four years while English was taught as a subject for two or three years and thereafter becoming a language of instruction from class five to eight (Sifuna 1980: 20, Chimera 2002: 51). The 1953-55 East African Royal commission report pushed English and English medium instruction even lower down the school by stating that teaching of English should begin at as low a standard as possible and that it should become the medium of instruction as early as it can be followed. The report went on to argue that teaching of Kiswahili was a waste of time and effort (Gorman 1974: 434). Kiswahili was progressively losing both to the localized languages of the region and to the English language. The main idea was to make English the lingua franca of Kenya (Mbaabu 1996: 82).

By the middle of the 1950s, there was growing dissatisfaction in Kenya about the poor performance of African and Asian children in national examination written in English in comparison to their European counterparts. The argument was that the performance was due to the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction in the greater part of primary schooling. The rapid demand for English medium classes was due to the fact that English was the language of examination which determined admission to secondary school in a society where education was about the only sure way of achieving upward mobility (Mazrui & Mazrui 1995: 59).

The prestige of the colonial language was enhanced by the fact that opportunities for good jobs and higher education depended on one's knowledge of a foreign language. As Ngugi observes the situation as it was then that, "English was the official vehicle of the magic formula of colonial elite Dom" (Ngugi 1986: 12). English was the key to prestige, material benefits and social status. Therefore, parents demanded that English be used for the sake of social mobility for their children in the colonial setting. They argued that without English, African youth would continue to be disadvantaged in a racially segregated education system. The idea was to put the youth on an equal footing with the more privileged Europeans and Asians (Bogonko 1992: 244).

English was therefore endorsed as the only language of instruction in all grades in the 1950s (Chimera 2000: 51). The wave of change from the use of mother tongues to English as the medium of instruction in all types of schools was so strong that it had a lasting

impact on language policy after independence (Mbaabu 1996: 116). A special centre within the Ministry of Education, Department of Inspectorate was established in 1957 in order to come up with a new approach to teaching English (Muthwii 2002: 3). This was popularly referred to as 'New Primary Approach (NPA). The centre's role was to prepare materials and to train teachers who would use English language as the medium of instruction in all grades of the primary schools throughout the country (Eshiwani 1993: 161, Mbaabu 1996: 116). In 1961, there was only one African standard one class using the new material, but by 1965, when the NPA was introduced, the ministry reported 2,871 classes using it (Sifuna 1980, Mbaabu 1996: 117). This figure shows how quickly the use of English as the medium of instruction grew among the African schools. The NPA emphasised a pupil-centred approach through English as the language of instruction.

Henceforth, the teaching of English was vigorously pursued. As Ngugi puts it, "In Kenya, English became more than a language; it was *the* language and all others had to bow before it in deference" (Ngugi 1986: 11) (emphasis in the original). Pupils were punished for using their mother tongue or the lingua franca Kiswahili in the school compound (Mbaabu 1995: 79). This gave the English language the impetus which enabled it to survive as the official language in Kenya after independence. During this period, Kiswahili was marginalized by the colonial authorities in order to reduce contact between Africans across tribal lines and thus to weaken the burgeoning nationalist political movement and mobilization against the colonial authorities (Mazrui & Mazrui 1995: 60).

None the less, the change in the economic lives of the people due to colonialism led to the spread of Kiswahili. People from different linguistic backgrounds migrated to the settled areas and urban centres in search of paid employment. They formed linguistically heterogeneous communities. In these communities, they used Kiswahili as the lingua franca. Consequently Kiswahili developed as a language of the growing powerless working class (Harries 1984: 118).

Regarding the development of Kiswahili in the three East African countries, it was only Tanzania which had a friendly policy for the growth of Kiswahili. This began way back during the German rule in Tanganyika (later Tanzania mainland) and later the British rule where Kiswahili was accorded a prominent part over the indigenous languages (Bogonko 1992: 240, Rubagumya 1990: 6).

Kiswahili in Tanzania was promoted both in administration and in education, and pressure was exerted on the missionaries to teach the language. In administration, much of the correspondence with the village headmen was conducted in Kiswahili. For instance, letters which were not written to the administration in either Kiswahili or German were ignored (Whitely 1974: 59). In German educational system, Kiswahili was used as a medium of instruction to train junior personnel and also made a school subject in its own right. German was also taught, but without content: it was proficiency in Kiswahili that mattered (Mohamed 2001: introduction).

When the British took over from the Germans, they recognized Kiswahili as the most important language in Tanganyika, to an extent of requiring some officers to obtain a modest standard in it at the same time giving them very lukewarm encouragement to learn other languages. This raised the need for researching into and documenting the language, both of which were successfully undertaken through the Institute of Kiswahili (Whitely 1974: 59). This explains why there was an over-reliance on Tanzania for literature works in Kenya for a long period of time. Kiswahili is used in Tanzania as a language of instruction through all the seven years of primary school and in some teacher training colleges. It is also used at the university as a medium of instruction in the department of Kiswahili (Brock-Utne 2005: 56).

From the above discussions, it is clear that the language policy that de-emphasized Kiswahili in favour of English in Kenya contributed to the little attention given to this language in academic circles as it was only used in informal situations in urban areas. This in turn affected the publication of stories targeting both adult and children in Kiswahili.

### **1.5.3 Primary education after independence**

In Kenya, as in many other African countries, during the early years of independence, education was viewed as an agent of social change through its contribution to economic development and increased political awareness of its citizenry. It was therefore imperative to transform the education system in order to have a close congruence with the felt needs of the emergent country (Olupot 1991: 207, Sifuna 1991: 76). The idea was to decolonize the education system and produce manpower to participate in the national development. In

order to meet these new challenges, education required a new content and a coordinated national program (Sifuna 1991: 76).

One of the Kenya government's top priorities after independence was to unify the separate schools into a coherent national education system (Eshiwani 1993: 33). In the late 1940s and 50s, as discussed in the previous section, there were basically three structures of education: one for Africans and the other for Asians and Europeans. The primary school for the Africans lasted only four years (Standard 1 to 4), while the European/Asian primary lasted seven years (standard 1 to 7). For most African students the fourth year was terminal. They were expected to have gained minimal literacy and numeric skills. Above all, they were expected to be able to read the bible and write since this was the main aim of the missionary education. On the other hand, the final year in the European/Asian primary schools was a preparatory time for secondary school education (Eshiwani 1993: 33). That is way after independence a lot of emphasis was placed on the expansion of educational opportunities for Africans in academic and doing away with any kind of discrimination.

These changes witnessed an increment of enrolment of children going to school since 1964 to date. For instance, in 1964, the number of children proceeding to Kenya Preliminary Examination (K.P.E.) increased rapidly from 62,000 in 1964 to 133,000 in 1966 (Bogonko 1992: 37). By 1983, the expansion in enrolment moved to 4.3 million and by 2005 the enrolment was 8.3 million (Republic of Kenya 2007).

The high rate of expansion which was witnessed from 1970 and climaxed in 1974 was due, firstly to the elimination of school fees in semi-arid and arid areas and the remission for needy cases throughout the country and, secondly, to the provision of free primary education for the first four years from January 1974. In 1979, free primary education was extended from standard 5 to 7. At the same time the government continued to develop boarding primary schools of which there were 86 in 1973. Fourteen more were added by 1983. Also a national school feeding scheme was launched. The idea was to encourage more parents to retain their children in schools (Bogonko 1992: 28).

Since her independence in 1963 to date, a number of commissions and bodies of enquiry have been constituted and appointed to look into the education system in Kenya (Bogonko 1992, Eshiwani 1993, Mbaabu 1996). The principle aim of these commissions was to

design relevant education in conformity with the aspirations of the people and the national goals. They were also to design a type of education that would stimulate in the individual, initiative, confidence, resourcefulness and a sense of dedication that are necessary in the development process of the nation (Bogonko 1992: 50). The recommendations by these commissions also constitute the basis of the current language policy in education in the country (Mbaabu 1996: 120). Among the commissions whose recommendations have had an impact on language in education included;

- The Kenya Education Commission (1964) also known as ‘The Ominde Report’.
- The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (1976) also known as ‘The Gachathi Report’.
- The Presidential Working Party on the Second University (1981) also known as ‘The Mackay Report’.

### **The Kenya Education Commission Report 1964 - The Ominde Report**

In 1964, the government of Kenya appointed a commission, ‘The Kenya Education Commission Report,’ better known as ‘The Ominde Report’ to survey the existing educational resources of Kenya and advice the government on the formation and implementation of the requisite policies for education in a newly independent country (Eshiwani 1993: 26). The commission was also to recommend, among other things, which language should be adopted as the medium of instruction in primary schools (Chakava 1994: 2).

In its presentation on the purpose of primary education, the report noted that, primary education is the stage of acquiring the basic skills for living. It is the most general of all kinds of education and is the basis both for training in many of the skills of organized life and further education. In addressing the question of relevance, it suggested that the education given in primary schools must be complete education in itself and must not continue to be simply a preparation for secondary school. This means that the kind of education should be relevant to those to whom it will be terminal as well as for those to whom it will be preparatory. The commission also stressed the social function of the primary school with much attention paid to the social training of children within the classroom and outside it (Bogonko 1992: 27).

Focusing on the cultural factors, the report noted that the pursuit of traditional art and crafts constitute an activity that can provide for expression of tribal or racial identity in forms that give pleasure and enrichment of life. Attention was also to be given to music and dance. This was to lead to the evolution of modern forms of tribal dancing as an inherited tradition of a contemporary spirit. The use of such modern development of traditional artistic forms in education is entirely in line with the dual role of education, which is to initiate children into the inherited spirit of the past and at the same time to prepare them for the demands of the present and future life (Sifuna 1991: 80). This Commission also supported the objectives of giving every child a minimum of seven years of free education. The report targeted this to be achieved in the year 1971 (Bogonko 1992: 34).

Regarding language in education, the commission did not revise the language issue inherited from the colonial regime, instead it endorsed English language as a medium of instruction in all schools in all grades whereas, Kiswahili, the language seen best suited to unify the nation would be a necessary subject. The indigenous languages were dislodged from their traditionally unchallenged position with one period a week assigned to the twenty indigenous languages approved to be used in schools (Gorman 1974: 441, Mbaabu 1996: 121). This Commission did not challenge the colonial linguistic legacy instead they gave the following reasons for recommending English:

*First the English medium makes possible a systematic development of language study and literacy which would be very difficult to achieve in the vernaculars. Secondly, as the result of the systematic development possible in the English medium, a quicker progress is possible in all subjects. Thirdly, the foundation laid in the first three years is more scientifically conceived, and therefore provides a more solid basis for all subsequent studies, than was ever possible in the old vernacular teaching. Fourthly, the difficulty transition from a vernacular to an English medium which can take up much time in primary V is avoided. Fifthly, the resulting linguistic equipments are expected to be much more satisfactory that cannot fail to expedite and improve the quality of post-primary education of all children. Lastly, advantages has been taken of the new medium to introduce modern infant techniques into the first three years , including activity and group work and balanced development of muscular*

*coordination. In short, we have no doubt about the advantages of English medium to the whole educational process, (Republic of Kenya 1964: 60).*

They argued:

*The choice of English does not mean that we wish to undermine the vernaculars. The vernacular languages are essential languages of verbal communication and we recognize no difficulty in including a daily period for story telling in vernacular in the curriculum of primary one, two and three. We apprehend therefore, that the vernaculars will continue to serve historic role of providing a means of domestic verbal communication. We see no case for assigning to them a role for which they are ill adapted namely, the role of educational medium in the critical early years of schooling (Republic of Kenya 1964: 60).*

The great desire to acquire English is attributed to the attitude which had been created in the pre-independence days (Adegbija 1994: 33). It was associated with the White collar job mentality. This was the time the government was Africanizing the positions formally held by the whites and since the official government records were in English language, then a good command of the language was vital.

The Ominde commission recommended that Kiswahili be taught as a compulsory subject in primary schools because of its usefulness as a unifying language and as a regional lingua franca. In support of their recommendation on Kiswahili, they noted:

*Those giving evidence were virtually unanimous in recommending a general spread of this language, not only to provide an additional and specifically African vehicle for national coordination and unification, but also to encourage communication on an international basis, not only within East Africa, but also with the eastern parts of the Congo and parts of Central Africa. Kiswahili is therefore recognized both as a unifying national language and as a means of Pan-African communication over a considerable part of the continent. In view of these important functions, we believe that Kiswahili should be a compulsory subject in primary school (Republic of Kenya 1964: 61).*

This recommendation, together with the failure to make Kiswahili an examinable subject at the end of primary school cycle, contributed to the retarding of Kiswahili because, it was

not considered an important subject by the schools (Bogonko 1992: 241). In some schools, Kiswahili was not even taught mainly because it was not an examinable subject at the end of primary school education. The problem of not teaching Kiswahili was said to be the shortage of qualified teachers. This was attributed to the fact that teacher training college concentrated on training for English medium teaching only, paying little or no attention to teaching of mother tongue languages and Kiswahili (Gachukia 1970: 22).

As far as indigenous languages were concerned, the commission's views were mixed although there was a general feeling that one or two subjects per day must be devoted to indigenous language in all primary schools. This was followed up by a circular from the Chief Inspector of schools in June 1965 which reminded all schools, of the importance of teaching indigenous languages as a subject (Chakava 1994: 3). This was after it was found that majority of the teachers had dropped the teaching of mother tongues and Kiswahili altogether and were using the time allocated to these subjects for the revision of other subjects that were examinable in schools (Gachukia 1970: 23).

Although there are several ways in which a language could be promoted, its teaching in a country's school system is certainly one of the best ways of promoting it. Teaching a language in schools helps not only to spread it but also to entrench it. It is only when a language is so spread and entrenched in a country that it can function effectively as a means of cross-ethnic communication. However, one recommendation that seems to have favoured Kiswahili was the introduction of a Department of Linguistics and African Languages in 1969 with Kiswahili as the main language of study. This was started in the faculty of Arts at the University College, Nairobi (Mbaabu 1996: 124).

The commission did not make any report or recommendation on publishing and acquisition of educational materials. However, in the report, an assessment was made regarding the fact that education was an economically expensive undertaking and may be beyond the reach of ordinary Kenyans. The commission considered the cost of items needed by pupils ranging from food (lunch), uniforms and textbooks to writing materials and school fees (Rotich 2004: 177).

As far as publishing of books is concerned, one can conclude from the above scenario that books were published mostly in English because they attracted quite a number of readers.



This is because the environment at that time favoured English, since it was the official language of instruction in schools and it was also widely used in government offices. And finally it carried ascertain amount of prestige in schools and outside. On the other hand, Kiswahili and mother tongue lacked literature, thus hindering any enthusiasm or motivation that could encourage the teaching in these languages. Again publishing in these languages meant that readership would be low.

However it should be pointed out that on attainment of political independence, Kenya needed to build a national identity in order to enhance national unity. However, none of the local languages would have served this purpose, because the choice of a major ethnic language would have caused disenchantment among other ethnic communities. Kiswahili was the least controversial choice in that it was a neutral language, because only a minority of Kenyans could claim it as a first language, yet the majority of people could speak it. Therefore, in August 1967, Kiswahili was formally recognized as Kenya's National language by the National Governing Council of Kenya African National Union (KANU) (Mbaabu 1996: 134).

### **The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies 1976 - The Gachathi Report.**

The government realized that education was not doing much to achieve the stated objectives adequately. Hence, a second commission on education was established in 1976, 'The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies', popularly referred to as the 'Gachathi Report'. This commission addressed itself to three major areas of reform. First, it addressed the syllabus and content of the primary education. Second, it focused on the extent to which there should be integration of life of the schools with that of the local community in which the schools are situated. Social integration, it was argued, would reduce the degree of alienation of the school leavers with social and economic condition in which the majority of them will eventually live and work (Sifuna 1991: 77). Thirdly, it focused on language use in schools.

The Gachathi Commission echoed the value of cultural aspects in the school system. It noted that every society has a culture which is transmitted from generation to generation through learning, copying and conservation. It recommended that the education system which had in many cases been instrumental as an agent of social alienation must be made

to make the necessary social correction by teaching a national culture and basic family and social life. The committee therefore, recommended that the curriculum embraces four major areas of study; languages, mathematics, science, cultural studies and pre-vocational studies in the upper primary classes (Sifuna 1991: 78). However, there was no mention of the role that children's literature could play in enhancing cultural understanding of the pupils.

The same commission recommended an extension of the waiver of fees to the full seven years of primary education by 1980 (Bogonko 1992: 37). This was put into effect in 1979 by the then President, Daniel Arap Moi. By the end of 1979, it was noted that although Universal Primary Education had not been fully achieved, enrolment of school-age children had risen from less than 50% in 1963 to over 85% in 1978 (Bogonko 1992: 38).

An attempt was made to provide both a balanced primary school course for the child's full development and an adequate preparation for the next stage of education (Sifuna 1991: 85). In selecting materials for the various subjects, teachers were required to take into account the ability of the children, stimulate their interests and lead to useful activities. In this regard, the syllabus was echoing one of the recommendations of the education commission that primary school provides manipulative skills for the majority of the children whether they terminate their education at the primary school or proceed to secondary school (Sifuna 1991: 85).

On language in education, the Gachathi commission altered the recommendation of 'The Kenya Education Commission's report 1964' that sought to do away with indigenous languages in education. Instead education in the indigenous languages in the first three years of school in linguistically homogenous areas was adopted as a policy. The commission recommended that in linguistically heterogeneous areas, Kiswahili was to be used as a medium of instruction in the first three years. Other than being used in heterogeneous areas, Kiswahili was recommended as an important language in all primary and high school grades, having more weight in the fourth form examination. It recommended that English be the language of instruction from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade up to university (Republic of Kenya 1976: 57, Chimera 2002: 52, Mbaabu 1996: 128).

The implication of this policy as far as the status of indigenous language is concerned is that they regained some prestige because of being given a role in education. On the use of mother tongue, the Gachathi report recommended that the Kenya Institute of Education should prepare materials in the form of graded sets of readers for each mother tongue, for teaching of those languages, as well as for the teaching of other subjects in the mother tongue. However what was prepared was not enough to cater for the whole country (Mbaabu 1996: 129).

Although the Gachathi Commission had recommended that Kiswahili becomes a compulsory and examinable subject in primary schools, this recommendation was not effected (Mbaabu 1996: 128). This meant that although Kiswahili was a mandated subject of the curriculum and was therefore allocated time on the timetable, it was not taught. Instead the time was spent teaching examinable subjects like English and Mathematics. The same reasons given during the time of the Ominde report for not implementing the recommendation that, Kiswahili should be taught as a compulsory subject in primary schools were still the same. This of course is a consequence of the colonial language policy which did not encourage the use and development of Kiswahili especially during the last decade of colonial rule.

The Gachathi report made a number of recommendations that touched on the publishing industry. It appreciated the fact that educational books have a long production cycle from the time of commissioning to the actual publication. They were also aware of the fact that at that time publishing industry was dominated by foreign publishers who could not adequately meet the needs of Kenyans by publishing books with a cultural fit to the needs of the Kenyan education system and its schools (Rotich 2004: 177). The report expressed the opinion that the situation would require a remedy. Indeed as Chakava (1998: 42) reports on books for children, “In those days there were hardly any locally published children’s books. Nairobi bookshops were full of beautifully illustrated books imported mainly from the United Kingdom”. The commission recommended that school textbooks and other materials be published and printed centrally by the East African Literature Bureau (now Kenya Literature Bureau) (Mbaabu 1996: 129). Only a small number of storybooks targeting children were published in Kiswahili.

### **The Presidential Working Party on the Second University 1981-The Mackay Report**

In 1981, another Commission was set up which totally changed the government policy on education. This was known as 'The Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya' (1981), better known as the 'Mackay Report.' The commission's terms of reference were to examine the feasibility of setting up a second university which might be geared to the needs of the country with particular emphasis on vocation-oriented courses (Bogonko 1992: 59). It addressed itself to the need to restructure the whole education system. This was because of problems which were faced by graduates of Kenyan education, particularly those from primary and secondary levels. Most school leavers could not be absorbed in employment. Therefore, the government found it necessary to change the educational approach from one which had existed since independence to education for self-reliance (Eshiwani 1993: 28).

The report agreed with the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976, which stated that primary school-leavers should acquire some basic education in addition to numeric and literary skills. It noted that one of the main aims of education is to enable the youth to play a more effective role in the life of the nation by imparting to them the necessary skills and knowledge and inculcating the right attitude. However, in practice, they noted that, formal education tended to concentrate on imparting knowledge for the sake of passing examinations (Republic of Kenya 1981: 7).

It was considered necessary that the primary school segment should be longer in order to achieve those objectives. It therefore recommended that in order to streamline the education system of the country as a whole, the primary education system be extended from seven years to eight years. The eight years was to be restructured to offer numeric and literacy skills in the first six years, and basic education with practical orientation in the last two years (Sifuna 1991: 84).

Thus the 8-4-4 system of education was started with eight years of primary education, four years of secondary and four years of university education. The commission outlined the primary schools curriculum objectives as including, learning opportunities which would enable pupils to acquire a suitable basic foundation for the world of work in the context of economic and manpower needs of the nation, and to appreciate and respect the dignity of

labour. It geared towards practical and technical education. This kind of education is regarded as education with production because it involves all learning activities that result in producing goods and services to satisfy societal needs. It is offered as a means of rearing a necessary and healthy balance between practical and academic learning (Eshiwani 1992: 29).

The commission also came up with major recommendations regarding the teaching of the national language at the university level. It recommended that an African language division incorporating, Kiswahili and other Kenyan languages should be started in the Faculty of Social, Cultural and Development Studies of the new university to be based in Eldoret (Mbaabu 1996: 131).

The report noted that many university graduates schooled in English have a poor command of Kiswahili and the rest of indigenous languages and therefore could not articulate the knowledge and skills acquired to the general population that does not speak English. Therefore, it recommended that Kiswahili be made a compulsory subject at the primary and secondary level (Republic of Kenya 1981: 43). This in itself made Kiswahili securely gain a second language status, by being made a compulsory and examinable subject in all grades of schools in Kenya, whereas, the other ethnic languages would be languages of instruction among respective ethnic groups in lower grades of primary school. This also helped Kiswahili to expand in terms of its terminology and also geographically.

Although the Mackay committee did not make any recommendation on how to provide books to schools, even after having recommended a new system of education (Rotich 2004: 178), it should be noted that this is the time that the demand for textbooks and other reading materials was intense especially in Kiswahili right from primary school to the university.

Since this period, Kiswahili has seen great developments in the publication of reading materials both for primary and secondary schools. The move to make Kiswahili a compulsory and examinable subject in primary and secondary schools in Kenya is one of the major milestones in the development of Kiswahili. The status of Kiswahili in the school system in particular and in the rest of the country in general, improved considerably during this period. This also contributed to the language's expansion in terms of its terminology. In addition, one notices that for most children in urban areas in Kenya, Kiswahili is

increasingly becoming a second mother tongue. In some families children acquire Kiswahili before learning the mother tongue, while in others they acquire it simultaneously with their respective mother tongue.

In this section, the study examined mainly the recommendations made by the various commissions on education in relation to English and Kiswahili in order to highlight its impact on the development of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenya. In the following two sections, the study will examine the state of mother tongue languages in education at the present moment and also examine *Sheng* as a variety of language that has impacted negatively on Kiswahili language in education.

#### **1.5.4 Mother tongue in education**

In Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, mother tongue education began with the efforts of various missionaries. The aim of these missionaries as stated elsewhere was to spread their religion as effectively as possible by teaching people to read scriptures in their own languages. And this is the period when the debate on whether or not to use mother tongue languages as medium of instruction started with the various missionary groups before independence (Njoroge 1990: 258). Most missionaries had settled for mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary schools (Mbaabu 1996: 62). By 1925, the missionaries had produced fifteen texts in Kiswahili, four in Kikuyu and one primer in Dholuo and in Maasai and a primer and first reader in Kamba (Gorman 1974: 411).

However, there were divergences in the attitude of settlers and government officials towards which language to use in school (Gorman 1974: 406). The missionaries were faced with many difficulties in implementing the mother tongue as languages of instruction in schools. Among them being the many languages and dialects found in Kenya, the training of teachers in a multiplicity of languages and the production of texts books (Gorman 1974: 406).

The Beecher Report of 1949 recommended the use of twenty mother tongues in primary schools, as a policy that was in effect up to 1964 (Chimera 2002: 51). While the Education Commission of 1964 (see 1.5.3) recommended that mother tongues should not be used for instruction in primary schools except for a daily period of storytelling in Standard 1 to 3, The Gachathi Committee of 1976 (see 1.5.3), reinstated the use of mother tongues when it

recommended that the language of instruction in standard 1 to 3 should be the language of the catchments area (Mbaabu 1996: 129). The committee recommended that provision be made for textbooks in Dabida, Kamba, Gikuyu, Maasai, Nandi, Luhya and Luo (Gorman 1974: 429).

In essence the Gachathi Committee was giving a clear recognition and realization that language is indeed a means of transmitting one's culture, and cultural identity and that for pedagogical reasons, studying in one's home language or mother tongue, particularly in the early years of schooling, will help the child acquire basic skills of reading, writing and concept formation (Swarts 1996: 19). This policy is still currently in effect at least in theory.

The Gachathi Commission looked to the East African Literature Bureau (now Kenya Literature Bureau) to produce materials in a wide range for recreational as well as instructional use. The supply of such literature was crucial if the aim of the committee were to be realized as they envisaged the three quarter of the primary school population will receive only such instruction as will enable them with further practice after leaving school to read and write (Gorman 1974: 429). The Kenya Institute of Education embarked on preparing instructional materials in 22 languages with the change of syllabus in the 8-4-4 system. The new set of books under the 8-4-4 system of education was known as *Tujifunze Lugha Yetu*-‘Let Us Learn our Language’. This replaced the old, *Tujifunze Kusoma Kikwetu*-‘Let Us Learn Our Mother Tongue’ (Mbaabu 1996: 147). However not all languages were developed due to various reasons. Some of the reasons were that some languages did not have a standardized orthography in addition, there were no trained people to write in those languages and more importantly, it would be expensive for the country to write books in all the 40 languages.

With regard to education, it has been argued (c.f. Meerkotter 2004: vii, Legere 1995: 71) that education can be promoted greatly if African languages are used as medium of instruction in Africa. Instead of alienating the learners from their culture and society, education through the medium of indigenous languages is supposed to root the learners in their own cultural environment. The use of indigenous languages is thus assumed to make education more relevant to African children. In addition, it fosters language identity of the children. What is more, the use of indigenous languages is also assumed to be a significant

factor in educational achievement (Bamgbose 1976, Obanya 1994: 14, Sigcau 2004: 240). These views had been suggested by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) way back in 1953, when they made a declaration on the use of vernacular in education as the best language of instruction for the learner. The declaration stated:

*...it is important that every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue...On educational grounds we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible. In particular, pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible.*

This argument is also supported by the African Union Cultural Charter for Africa. For instance, Article 6 (2) of this charter states that member states should “promote teaching in national languages in order to accelerate their economic, political and cultural development” (quoted in Musau 1999: 118).

The above state of affairs has prompted many scholars of African linguistics to call for the promotion and development of African languages (c.f. Brock-Utne et al 2004). It is assumed that the promotion of these languages will best serve the interests of the African people whether in education, economics, politics or culture (Musau 1999: 117).

Unfortunately, this insight is not acted upon as the promotion of African languages is constrained by many factors. In a study done by Muthwii and others in 2002 on ‘Language Policy and Practices in Education in Kenya and Uganda,’ they observed that there were many problems faced by the teachers in teaching of the mother tongues. A summary of the problems encountered in schools by the teachers is presented below:

- a. Because of severe lack of books written in mother tongue languages for the teaching of various curriculum subjects, teachers feel abandoned by education authorities. They feel left alone to wrestle with the hard task of translating everything into the mother tongue given the fact that some English words have no equivalents in mother tongue language.



- b. Vocabulary in mother tongue languages is said to be limited. Consequently, the teachers feel that it is hard to be expressive in mother tongue, for example, the terminology for the science and mathematics was not developed in the mother tongue. Again giving notes to students in mother tongue, for example was seen to be difficult and wordy.
- c. No examinations are set in mother tongue even though most students fail to understand questions written in English. Government policy is not clear in that, while it advocates for mother tongue as language of instruction in lower primary, it allows for schools to set examinations in English.
- d. Double standards between rural and urban schools are tolerated. Consequently, rural schools see themselves as disadvantaged as they obey the policy while urban schools are allowed to teach in English yet all the children must sit the same examination.
- e. There may be various dialects of a language in a given speech community and it is not clear which dialect forms should be used in the school system. This confuses both children and teachers of lower primary school classes (see also results in 5.1.1.7).
- f. Parents at times do not buy the few books available in mother tongue.
- g. Some parents discourage their children from taking mother tongue language seriously because it is not examined at the end of primary education. Rural parents fear their children being left behind by children in urban contexts who use English yet by the end of the eight years they will all sit for the same examination, (Muthwii 2002: 18).

A look at the above problems as enumerated by teachers, suggest that their genesis is the lack of resources on one hand and on the other, a policy situation that causes conflict or contradictions in the teaching and learning environment (Muthwii 2002: 20). Again because African languages are excluded from important formal domains where focus is on the official language, teachers, parents and learners generally have a negative attitude towards their own mother tongue as languages of instruction. Most parents see the usefulness of English language in terms of its future utility for their children.

In addition, at the publishing level, publishers decry the poor sells associated with books written in mother tongue and therefore do not want to invest in mother tongue languages. They argue that there is limited readership when one considers that there are over 40

language groups in Kenya whose speakers are not many compared to Kiswahili and English. A closer examination of the *Approved List of Primary and Secondary Schools Textbooks and other Instructional Materials 2007* shows this to be true.

Kenya as with a number of other African countries across Africa has a majority of its children going through an education system that fails to provide instruction in the language they speak at home, which is the language that they understand best. Reasons have been given above. This, it has been argued, contributes to illiteracy and results in people entering the workforce with inadequate skills. Experts maintain that pupils are better placed to become literate when they start learning in their first language and then gradually move to another (Brock-Utne 2004).

In most countries, campaigns surrounding mother tongue education are now focusing on introducing policies that will effectively address mother tongue instruction in schools (Obanya 1994: 14, Asmara Declaration 2000). Local languages play an important part in promoting culture and giving children a sense of belonging and identity. However, the promotion of mother tongue requires broad support. It needs a lot of sensitization on parents so that they can understand why it is important for children to be taught in their mother tongue. The training of teachers and production of teaching and reading materials need to be taken seriously by the relevant organs in the country.

Research experiments, studies on and practices in a number of African languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, Kanuri, Fulfulde and others have amply demonstrated that all African languages are capable of development as media of education both at formal and informal levels (Fafunwa 1990: 153). All languages are equal as no one language is superior to another in thought and action. Countries like Namibia that attained independence in the 1990s have managed to put African languages in their rightful place in the education system (Legere 1996: 71, Davids 2000: 25). Mother tongue languages need not die. They are a reservoir of a people's past and present cultural heritage; they are constant reminders of the values and attitudes that shapes their present and they have a special function to fulfil in any society (Fafunwa 1990: 162).

In the case of Kenya which has different ethno linguistic groups, Kiswahili which has its roots in Africa is highly valued because it is considered neutral since it is not associated

with any particular ethnic group numerically, politically or economically, thus does not arouse the jealousies of other groups. Therefore, for this reason, it should be promoted and supported so as to carry out the function of language of instruction in schools. This can be done considering that Kiswahili is the national language of Kenya and is spoken by over 80% of the population. Considering also how it has spread in the country due to the majority of the population accepting it, Kiswahili can be used in schools that are situated in both urban and rural areas. Lastly there are a lot of available materials in Kiswahili for all levels of the education system arising from the studies and researches that have been carried out in the language.

### **1.5.5 *Sheng* and its impact on Kiswahili in Kenya**

The language situation in Kenya cannot be said to be fully in perspective without a brief examination of a variety of language popularly known as *Sheng*. *Sheng* is a social code that is widely spoken among the urban and a few rural youngsters in Kenya (Mbaabu 1996: 212). Going by the popularly accepted etymology, the name *Sheng* comes from a combination of the words SwaHili and ENGLISH thus *Sheng*. *Sheng* is mostly considered as an urban language that emerged from the complex multilingual situation in Nairobi. Even though most young Kenyans understand and speak English and Kiswahili, they prefer to speak in *Sheng*. It therefore dominates the discourse of primary, secondary and even university students outside their formal classroom settings (Githiora 2002: 159). And it is considered by many a youth as their own ‘official’ language.

*Sheng* testifies to a reconstruction of pre-existent system of Kiswahili (Ogechi 2002: 338). This variety sources its word or lexical items from coinage and borrowing from the various Kenyan languages depending on the environment where it is spoken. However, Kiswahili, English, Dholuo and Kikuyu languages are the prominent contributors to *Sheng* vocabulary. The borrowed lexemes are usually manipulated as more are coined in order to create a vocabulary suitable for communication.

Various theories exist about the origins of *Sheng* (for instance, Mazrui 1995, Mbaabu 1996, Abdullaziz & Osinde 1997, Chimera 2000, Ogechi 2002 & 2005, Githiora 2002 and Mbaabu & Nzunga 2003). Abdullaziz & Osinde (1997) claim that *Sheng* emerged as a youth code in the eastern suburbs of Nairobi in the 1970’s and then spread to other parts of

the city. On the other hand, Mbaabu & Nzunga (2003: iii), posit that just like other cities of developing countries and Nairobi being one of them, adequate housing is a big problem. Urban dwellers have to live so close together that some of them end up sacrificing some of their personal privacy, which they would otherwise enjoy in the rural areas. Such a case seems to have affected the youth to the extent of forcing the young people to take advantage of the existing state of multilingualism to secretly pass messages amongst themselves while keeping adults and especially parents, in the dark.

On the contrary, a historical colonial biography by Michael Karanja Ngugi, *Miaka 52 Jela* (1989) (Fifty two Years in Jail ) indicates that, there already existed a type of variety similar to *Sheng* as far back as the early 1930's in the Nairobi underworld among the pick pockets. Karanja gives some of the lexicon used by this group of young people who belonged to this underworld. For instance, they used to call themselves *mapancha* (pickpockets). Their sentence construction was similar to what *Sheng* displays today. For example, *Namudeki pai ana kam saidi hii hebu tupangue* (I have seen a policeman come this way. Let us disperse p.24). This view is supported by Mazrui (1995: 172) who also sees *Sheng* as a creation of the colonial era.

It can be deduced from this that *Sheng* emerged as an underworld code way back in the colonial period. Thus, it was the early immigrants in Nairobi, including migrant labourers, Mau Mau (colonial freedom fighters) and ex-Mau Mau, their relations and school drop-outs who coined a new code from linguistic resources available to them in the new multilingual urban context. This code then spread through the informal sector and was used by shoeshine boys and men, curio sellers, hawkers, parking boys and then the youngster in the estates of Nairobi (Mazrui 1995: 173).

In examining how new languages come into being Mazrui (1995: 108) points out that people who are in the process of establishing independent community links and bonds have a tendency to give this a distinct expression which may not only serve as a symbol of solidarity and positive social divergence from other groups, but also a functional code for expressing valued feelings, attitudes and loyalties. The youth in Kenya may not be out for some mischief but they just want to have something that will make them different and therefore be identified with.

It is because of this that *Sheng* has been seen by many to be just slang (Mazrui 1995: 173). Slang is a set of expressions that is characteristic of informal language and tends to change rapidly and often serves to indicate solidarity within a given social group and is often deemed to be out of place in formal style of language (Bertoncini 1995: 4). Crystal (1991: 53) says that slang is used as a means of making social or linguistic identities. He adds that slang usage attracts those who for reasons of personality or social identity wish to be linguistically different. He enumerates various reasons for the use of slang as; for fun of it, as an exercise in wit or ingenuity, to be different, to be arresting, to escape from clichés, to enrich the language, to add concreteness to speech, to reduce seriousness, to be colloquial, for ease of social interaction, to induce intimacy and show that one belongs, to exclude others; and, to be secret.

*Sheng* serves most if not all the purposes indicated above depending on the context of usage. For instance it serves the dual function of creating social distance with the out group, which is the mainstream urban culture while strengthening bonds of solidarity for the in group (Mazrui 1995: 172). This is seen in reasons of wanting to be secretive as was explained by Ngugi (ibid) in his autobiography. Creation of new words is also a sign of wit and ingenuity and this is seen in the way new words are formed all the time.

As stated above, *Sheng* was once considered a sub variety of a restricted in-group however this is no longer the case. Enkvist (quoted in Bertoncini 1995: 186) argues that if a language which was originally used by members of a restricted in-group within it spreads to a whole social class, then it stops being slang and becomes a sociolect, thus a code for a particular group in the society. Indeed considering the way *Sheng* has spread, we can agree that it is no longer pure slang but a sociolect used by youth in Kenya. It can be heard being spoken by pre-school children within the estates and some people at their places of work.

Structurally, *Sheng* is a mixture of English, Kiswahili and some indigenous languages spoken in Kenya. Its syntax is basically that of Kiswahili, but through ingenious code-switching, it draws from the phonology, morphology and lexicon of the Kenyan languages spoken in the city such as Luo, Gikuyu, Luhya, Gujarati and other coastal languages such as Giriama (Mbaabu 1996: 214). English is also an important source of many loan words in *Sheng*. Most of the words in the original languages are distorted in pronunciation so that their origins are difficult to pin down. On the other hand, the context in which words are

used in *Sheng* may be very far removed from their original contexts in the original language (Chimera 2000: 15).

Another characteristic of *Sheng* is that it does not have a stable vocabulary. As soon as a term becomes known to many people, it is discarded and a new term coined. Most of the words which fall into this category are mainly those dealing with illicit drinks and drugs like bhang (Mbaabu & Nzunga 2003: iii). This has made older people in the society see *Sheng* as a secret code, a language used amongst the youth to secretly pass messages while keeping adults in the dark (Githiora 2002: 160). On the other hand, the creation of new words is aimed at making the variety sound more current. Several forms of variations of *Sheng* exist, making it harder to pinpoint the specific point of diffusion (Githiora 2002: 160, *Sheng* on the website: [www.sheng.co.ke/kamusi.asp](http://www.sheng.co.ke/kamusi.asp)). This means therefore that different areas have different vocabularies.

However, *Sheng* has become a fashionable sign of modernity and cosmopolitan for the Kenyan youth. It has permeated much of Nairobi's social strata and its influence can be felt in other towns and rural areas of Kenya especially among the youth. The Kenyan youth feel they have a say in the development of the lexicon of their language. They feel more confident in speaking *Sheng* than either standard Kiswahili or English. They also see themselves as arbiters of what constitutes correct *Sheng*. This language does not only give them national identity, but it is also a language they can manipulate (Mbaabu & Nzunga 2003: ii).

The code has also found plenty of space in local television and radio stations. Rapping and singing in *Sheng* in both secular and spiritual music is currently enjoying great success among the youth across all social-economic classes in Nairobi. In future, *Sheng* is likely to increase in use and in number of speakers, as more young people identify with its dynamic and innovative culture.

Many children use *Sheng* as household language (Githiora 2002: 175). However, young school going children have not been able to demarcate the line between the use of *Sheng* at home and in school. *Sheng* has been blamed for poor performance in Kiswahili and English, which are the official languages in primary schools in Kenya (Mbaabu 1996: 212, Githiora 2002: 175, findings from this study 5.1.2.11 & 5.4.2.11). The negative impact is

particularly felt in Kiswahili because of the similarities in the structure of *Sheng* and Kiswahili (Ogechi 2005: 341, Momanyi 2009: 134, Githiora 2002: 175).

The problem of children not being able to express themselves in either of the language because of the negative impact from *Sheng* and other academic reasons can be solved through the provision of well written storybooks in Kiswahili. For books provide a child with opportunities to learn a language thus freeing him to explore its meaning and requiring him to use his higher mental processes.

## **1.6 Children's literature**

This section focuses on the concept of children's literature, its definition and the role it plays in the life of its targeted readers.

The question of what children's literature is has occupied the minds of many scholars who deal with children's books for a long time. In most of the discussions, the question has been, does children's literature refer to books written for or read by children or both.

As Hunt (1990: 1) points out, 'defining children's literature involves a great deal of primary definition'. This means, first understanding what is meant by literature, what the book is for and who or what is the audience and how that audience reads. Therefore, in order to come up with the definition of children's literature in this study, a brief definition of what literature in general is, is relevant here.

Townsend (1990: 60) defines literature as all works of imagination which are transmitted primarily by means of the written word or spoken narratives. It includes novels, stories and poetry with the addition of those works of non-fiction which by their quality of style or insight may be said to offer experience of a literary nature. In explaining what literature offers, Townsend (ibid) says that literature is above all enjoyment. The kind of enjoyment is not only in the shallow sense of easy pleasure, but enjoyment of a profound kind; enjoyment of the shaping by art of the raw material of life, and enjoyment, too, of the skill with which that shaping is performed; enjoyment in the stretching of one's imagination, the deepening of one's experience, and the heightening of one's awareness. However, it is important to note that since human beings are all different, the pleasure that one seeks as well as those encountered may be very personal and they also vary from one individual to the other (Lukens 2003: 4).

Ngugi (1981: 5-6) sees literature as resulting from conscious acts of men in society. According to him, literature is seen on two levels. At the level of the individual artist, the very act of writing implies a social relationship: one is writing about somebody for somebody. At the collective level, literature, as a product of men's intellectual and imaginative activity embodies, in words and images, the tensions, conflicts, contradictions at the heart of community's being and process of becoming. It is a reflection on the aesthetic and imaginative lanes, of a community's wrestling with its total environment to produce the basic means of life, food, clothing, shelter, and in the process creating and recreating itself in history. Ngugi goes on to say that literature is in itself part of man's self-realization as a result of his wrestling with nature. It is a symbol of man's creativity, of man's historical process of being and becoming. It is an enjoyable end-product of man's artistic labour. But more important is that, literature shapes peoples' attitudes to life, to the daily struggle with nature, the daily struggles within a community, and the daily struggle within one's individual souls and selves.

Lukens (1982: 5) sees literature as offering many kinds of understanding. This understanding comes from the exploration of the human condition, the revelation of human nature and the discovery of humankind. According to her, literature shows human motives, for what they are, inviting the reader to identify with or to react to a fictional character. Through literature one sees the mind of the character or moves into the subconscious that even the character does not know. Through the writer's careful choice of details from the past, the current environment and the imaginary world of the character, we come to see clearly the character's motivation for action.

So what then is children's literature? Defining what children's literature is, has not been without debates (for instance, Chambers 1990, Lesnik-Oberstein 1996, Townsend 1990, Killam & Rowe 2000, Nittnaus 2002). This is because of the fact that the terms children and literature are culturally and historically determined concepts (Hunt 1990: 1). For instance, age which is normally the basic characteristic of this group of people varies from culture to culture in many societies all over the world. This means that every community has its own criteria of considering who a child is in the respective communities. For instance, Tucker (1981: 9) defines children as "those beings between school age and puberty." Tucker comes up with this definition for the purpose of his study. In Kenya and



in many African societies the concept of a child is becoming gradually linked with the idea of a school population (Killam & Rowe 2000: 64). This definition only helps to put the child in a certain perspective.

In defining what children's literature is, Chambers (1990: 91) for example, puts forward the argument of some people who say that there is no such a thing as books for children but only books which children happen to read. Although he says that there could be some truth in this argument, he points out to the fact that some books are clearly for children in a specific sense in that they were written by their author deliberately for children. On the other hand, some of the books that were never specifically intended for children have qualities which attract children to read them. For instance, Daniel Defoe's *Robison Crusoe* and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* are examples from the Western repertoires, while in Africa Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not Child* are conspicuous illustrations (Killam & Rowe 2000: 64).

Townsend (1990: 61) seems to agree with the fact that if some books meant for adults are read by children and vice versa, then one is tempted to say that there is no children's literature but just literature. However he notes that indeed children do not have a separate form of life from adults; no more than children's books are a separate form of literature. Children are part of mankind just as children's literature is part of literature. Yet the fact that children are part of mankind does not save one from having to separate them from adults for certain essential purposes. On the other hand, it does not mean that the fact that children's literature is part of literature saves one from having to separate it for practical purpose. Finally, Townsend (1990: 61) offers a pragmatic definition of children's literature by saying:

*It appears that for better or for worse, the publisher decides. If he puts a book on the children's list, it will be reviewed as a children's book and will be read by children if it is read at all. If he puts it on the adult list, it will not - at least not immediately.*

Although publishing plays a crucial role in the classification of books as children, the definition is not satisfactory in understanding what children's literature real is.

Townsend comes up with four attributes that writers and reviewers of children's literature consider important for the targeted readers; suitability, popularity or potential popularity, relevancy and merit (Townsend 1990: 62). Suitability involves appropriateness to the supposed readership or reading age. It is an attempt by the writer and reviewer to select or assign books to particular age groups or types of children. Relevance refers to the power or possible power of theme or subject to make the child more aware of current social or personal problems or to suggest solutions to him. This is where a story appears to convey a message. Merit on the other hand involves the whole literary merit of the book.

The first three attributes; suitability, popularity and relevance are child centred. This is because one always looks for suitability to the child, popularity with the child and relevance to the child. While the fourth is book centred because it focuses on the literary merit of the book.

Lesnik-Oberstein (1996: 17) agrees that the problem of defining children's literature arises from the fact that, some books meant for adult literature are read by children and vice versa.

Finally, Lesnik-Oberstein offers her definition of children's literature by saying, 'it is a category of books, the existence of which absolutely depends on supposed relationships with a particular reading audience: Children,' (Lesnik-Oberstein 1996: 17). This definition of children's literature means that it is underpinned by purpose, in that it wants to be something in particular because this is supposed to connect it with that reading audience, the child, with which it declares itself to be overtly and purposefully concerned.

In defining children's literature, Lukens (1982: 8) starts by pointing out that children are not little adults. She goes on to say that children are different from adults in experience, but not in species, in degree but not in kind. For this reason therefore, literature for children differs from literature for adults in degree but not in kind. Literature for children as for adults is intended to provide enjoyment and understanding. Children too seek pleasure from a story however the sources of their pleasure are limited since their experiences are more limited. Children may not understand the same complexity of ideas since their understanding is more limited. For them to grasp certain ideas, these ideas must be presented in a more simple way both in language and in form (Lukens 1982: 9).

Related to the necessity for simplicity in the expression of ideas are vocabulary and attention span. Stories meant for children are more directly told, with fewer digressions and more obvious relationship between characters and actions, and between characters themselves (Lukens 1982: 9).

Osazee is particular in her definition of children's literature because she focuses on the African children as the receivers of African literature and defines it as:

*...that piece of literary creation which draws its subject matter from the African world view and which is written in a language and style the African child can comprehend. It must be seen as promoting African culture and enables the child or young adult to understand and appreciate his or her environment better and it must give him or her some pleasure (Osazee 1991: 74).*

Osazee defends herself by saying that this definition does not mean that literature from other places will be meaningless for the African child. This is because children might find such works entertaining and educative. However, she argues that these kinds of works cannot be regarded as African children's literature because they do not seek to promote African culture (Osazee 1991: 74).

From her definition, Osazee views children's literature as a form of cultural transmission. She sees it as a way of helping children identify themselves as a people thus creating a sense of belonging and a way of pointing out the way to the future. Through literature, children can gain self-realization and self confidence as genuine members of an African society because within it is embedded Africa's cultural heritage.

In this study children's literature will apply to literary works targeting primary school children and which are meant for imparting knowledge and providing entertainment and enjoyment. The study recognizes the fact that the term is sometimes stretched to include works that are outside the literary field (Mpesha 1995: 3). These include books and other reading materials that invite the child to read on his or her own. This means therefore that these are materials that children are capable of reading for pleasure.

Most scholars of children's literature consider children's literature as playing a crucial role in the life of a child reader (for instance, Mwanzi 1982, Brooks 1982, and Huck 1979). According to Mwanzi (1982: 3), children's literature is crucial to the mental, psychological

and social development of a child. Literature stimulates children's imagination and sharpens their awareness of the world around them. These are important social functions that make children's literature an essential tool in the process of socialization. It is a means of gaining deeper understanding of other people's culture, which can serve as a basis for building better understanding between communities and even nations. It is through literature that one finds himself or herself projected fully inside another human being, looking out on the world through their eyes. In the course of reading about others, the child learns about himself; he also discovers that other people have the same thought and feelings as his.

On the other hand, literature plays the role of strengthening the formation of values and feelings of solidarity, equity and firmly establishes the qualities of tolerance, compassion, sharing, caring, civil responsibility and ability to resolve conflicts through non-violent means and critical acumen (Brooks 1982: 306, Otim 2000: 80).

Another factor is that of enjoyment. When a child enjoys a certain book, it leads to the more rapid skills of reading that also leads to the frequent practice and a more receptive mind and finally enables the child to form a habit of reading.

Children's literature can be classified into various genres. A genre is a kind or a type of literature that has a common set of characteristics (Lukens 1982: 13). Each of these genres contributes to knowledge and understanding of the child reader in various ways. Lukens (1982: 14) classifies genres in children's literature as follows: Realistic fiction with subgenres of animal realism, historical realism, sports stories; fantasy with subgenres of fantastic stories, highly fantasy, and science fiction; and traditional stories with subgenres of fables, folktales, myths, and folk epic. Poetry, biography and informational books are still other genres of literature for children. It is important to know that in a sense different genres require emphasis on different elements. However, although the genres are distinct, they also overlap because they do contain all elements but in varying combinations and degrees.

Childhood is a time when character and habits are formed. This is the time to also create readers who will be lifelong learners. The stories that are planted in their minds in the early years will shape the way they think of themselves and the world for a lifetime. In essence,

childhood is of central importance to the development of any society. It is paramount therefore that issues relating to universal primary education should also include children's literature. It is important that storybooks should not only be made available to children, but should be taught to children. This will encourage children to read for pleasure and to also gain knowledge. Huck in *Children's Literature in the Elementary school* (1979: 4) says this of literature:

*Literature is the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language. The province of literature is the human condition; life with all its feelings, thoughts, and insights.*

If this be the case then, children as human beings who experience these feelings need not be left out. They are supposed to be exposed to literature at an early age and be made to interact with it and so experience it.

Having discussed the concept of children's literature, the following section focuses on the integration of Kiswahili language and children's literature in primary school curriculum in Kenya.

### **1.7 Integration of Kiswahili language and children's literature in primary school curriculum.**

Bacchus (quoted in Taylor and Mulhall 1997: 52), defines integration as, "the combination of several components of an object, organization or a system into a whole in order to render it entire or complete". In curriculum studies, integration is the blending or fusion of disciplines especially those that have close similarities to form one composite whole (Mawasi 2002: 5). In this case, the integration of Kiswahili language and children's literature are seen as having close similarities.

In the year 2002, the Ministry of Education through the Kenya Institute of Education (K.I.E.) formulated a new syllabus in Kiswahili language (Ministry of Education 2002). Among the major changes was the re-emphasis and integration of Kiswahili language and children's literature in Kiswahili from class one to class eight. This was so as to meet some of the objectives stated in the Kiswahili language syllabus which include: inculcating the habit of reading among pupils and at the same time to create and promote a positive attitude towards Kiswahili as the national language. These changes were made after it had

been observed that literature in Kiswahili had been underrated as a valuable subject in primary schools (Mlacha 1991: 76). What mattered then was a good command of the language and skills which facilitated passing the examination.

A closer examination of the original syllabus shows that it was basically structural; the four main language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing were separated and treated as such. The syllabus placed more emphasis on the mastery of language structures, teaching the pupils how to form sentences correctly: thus it taught them to manipulate the structures of the language easily and without errors. In the end there were pupils who ended up being structurally competent but communicatively incompetent.

In the new syllabus emphasis is also put on children's literature where, all pupils are supposed to be taught all the genres of literature including traditional stories with the subgenres of fables, myths, legends, riddles, proverbs and folk epics, poetry, songs and different types of fiction with subgenres of realism, historical realism together with fantasy stories with its subgenres of fantastic stories and science fiction and other relevant materials that focus on emerging issues in the society such as children's right, child abuse, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. As the syllabus clearly states, "Literature helps the child to use language properly, to expand his ideas and to enjoy different forms of writing".

The curriculum developers felt that there was need to expose pupils to language as it is used in the context of the people. By so doing, the Kiswahili language lessons should generate an intense love for literature and vice versa. Other than these aspects, it was observed that literature also enhances a child's social skills through interaction with other pupils.

It was felt that children's literature in Kiswahili was best taught when it was integrated with Kiswahili language as they noted in the introduction to the Kiswahili syllabus for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), ( Ministry of Education 2002: 89) that, "it is important to note that literature is part and parcel of language learning". The Kiswahili language specialists also observed that there was need for a syllabus that would re-emphasize the development of four language skills namely; listening and speaking, reading and writing by integrating them because each of these skills is seen as reinforcing or being reinforced by the others.

The aims of teaching Kiswahili as a subject are to impart to the child the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the language so that the child may understand and be understood with ease, have control of the four skills so that he can enjoy them for a wide range of purpose in a wide range of circumstances, retain the skills permanently and be able to develop them further, develop a habit of reading for pleasure and finally come to love Kiswahili as the national language of his country (Ministry of Education 2002: 90).

In teaching listening and talking for example, it is pointed out that the aim of talking in the classroom is to lead the child to be able to explain himself clearly, correctly, fluently and easily. As children develop their capacity for oral language, they are learning the rules of language use. This knowledge will be translated into expectations for printed language as well. The integration of language and literature would directly lead to intensive and extensive reading and writing, for example, creative writing as in poetry and short stories, speaking and listening as in dramatization (Ministry of Education 2002: 90). Hence, integration through reading, through oral literature, through writing and through listening and speaking is achieved.

The Ministry of Education recommended intensive and extensive reading practices, silent reading alone and under supervision, library work, reading for general information and speed reading. The pupils are therefore supposed to be encouraged to read a wide range of books (Ministry of Education 2002: 90). The curricular designers emphasize the reading component of the syllabus reasoning that both intensive and extensive reading expose learners to applied language and provide a good springboard from which to launch out into literature learning in later years .

The literature aspect was re-introduced in the revised syllabus in order to equip the learners with literary skills and at the same time to show the pupils that reading can be a source of pleasure and so a love of reading is fostered in them (Ministry of Education 2002: 90). These literary texts can be used to develop critical and analytical thinking and reasoning to issues and appreciation of a variety of literary works. Some of the type of thinking and reasoning that pupils can be exposed to include, looking for main points and supporting details, comparing and contrasting, looking for cause and effect relationship, judging and evaluating a text (Ghosn 2003: 3).

Indeed research has shown that there is positive correlation between extensive reading and acquisition of various skills in language (Yilmaz 2000: 4, Clark & Amelia 2005: 13). Literature therefore is a veritable resource for the development of a child and a tool for facilitating language competence.

The Ministry of Education also recommended the reading of literature in primary school education as it was seen to be a source of cultural knowledge. This happens when the learners are exposed to different cultures, values and norms of other people. Thus, literature is not seen as a material to be used but also as a means to learning.

In this case therefore, what the children read should depict the realities of the life and customs of the peoples of Kenya, in their homes and villages, in what they eat, and what they produce. It should reflect the beauty of the country's mountains, lakes, rivers, plains and the great oceans that border the African continent; the patterns of work and recreation; the traditions of the society as a whole in family, religion and politics. Appropriate literature of Kenya, Africa and the rest of the world enables Kenyan children to see themselves better in the world as a whole. The power of literature in developing empathy and tolerance is well documented in research on multicultural literature and peace education (Ghosn 2003: 1).

The integration of language and literature calls upon teachers to handle them in a manner that emphasizes their interdependence as mutually enriching modes of expression. The teachers are therefore compelled to encourage the children to read as much as they can. In the past too many children have left school without having read anything more than what the set textbooks and primers have contained. Now much more is required and the importance attached to storybook reading is reflected in the time allocation given to this activity. A thirty-five minutes period is allocated for every class as a library hour where children are supposed to read storybooks.

The provision of supplementary reading materials and especially storybooks in Kiswahili has seen a tremendous growth in literature for children in Kiswahili in Kenya since the implementation of Free Primary Education program in 2003. For instance, in the year 2005, the number of Kiswahili storybooks found in the *Approved List of Primary and Secondary Schools Textbooks and Other Instructional Material* was 101 (Ministry of Education 2005)



and by 2007, the number of storybooks published and approved in Kiswahili had increased to 270 (Ministry of Education 2007).

The publication of many storybooks makes it difficult for the teachers and parents to select storybooks for children. In this plethora of storybooks, there is a great danger of overlooking really fine literature (Huck 1979: 4). Again it is not possible for teachers to know all the storybooks published every year. In order to help teachers make wise decisions, the Ministry of Education through The Kenya Institute of Education, came up with a guide book that could be used as a reference tool thus the *Approved List of Primary and Secondary Schools Textbooks and other Instructional Materials* (2007) popularly known as, '*The Orange Book*'. This guide book is revised periodically in order to include the most current books in the market. The grade level of the readers, prices of the storybooks, publishers and authors of the storybooks are all included in the guide book. All primary schools are supposed to have this book so that they are made aware of the books that are available in the market.

The supplementary readers are important both as sources of literature, giving information and instruction on the correct usage of Kiswahili, increasing vocabulary and at the same time providing entertainment for the children. The requirement that these storybooks should be read over and above the texts is itself a major step forward and should help to foster the reading habit and permit the children to develop beyond initial literacy to permanent functional literacy.

Despite the availability of storybooks in schools, there was need for this study to be carried out to find out if at all children have access to these storybooks and at the same time attempt to explain their reading habits. Not much has been done in Kenya in relation to children's reading habits in Kiswahili although the books are circulating among children. Children's literature, as argued by Mpesha (1996: 2) needs the same critical evaluation and theoretical attention that adults' literature is accorded. It deserves even more attention and analysis because its consumers are at a more critical period of growth and development and the literature they are given must take into consideration their cultural lives, their psychological states and their literary development. This study provides a description of the state of children's literature in primary school in Kiswahili by focusing on the reading habits of primary school pupils and their reading environments.

## **1.8 Statement of the problem**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by examining and describing the reading habits of pupils both in school and at home. Reading habits refer to the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and tastes of reading (Telle & Akande 2007: 121). It involves a pattern with which an individual organizes his or her reading. Therefore, reading habits are those tendencies in reading behaviour that one creates for him/her self and especially reading for pleasure.

In this study the reading habits were measured in terms of pupils' attitudes towards reading, the amount of reading materials available to pupils both at school and at home, the accessibility of the reading materials, the frequency of reading for pleasure, the reading environment that pupils are exposed to and any other activities that pupils engage in that contribute to enhancing and maintaining of reading habits.

Other than focusing on storybooks in Kiswahili alone, the study was also interested in other relevant literature such as newspapers and magazines that are aimed at encouraging children to read. By drawing on the response of the children, the study intended to give prominence to the target reader whose feedback is important for all stakeholders in children's literature.

Secondly the study also sought to find out the role of head teachers and Kiswahili teachers in influencing pupils' reading habit acquisition and in motivating them to read storybooks written in Kiswahili.

It has been observed that teachers are very central to any transformation in the school system (Mawasi 2002: 55, Obanya 1994: 10). They are an important agent of change because of the key role they play in the process of education as major executors of the teaching and learning process. Teachers also play an important role in the pupils' academic achievements. The teacher is expected to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic and inspiring. He should have positive attitudes towards the subject he is teaching and towards his pupils. Some of the ways in which teachers affect changes in pupil's attitude include enthusiasm for the subject, reinforcement and commitment to help pupils to learn and use of praise (Ogula 1994: 8). These factors in turn earn respect for the teacher which in turn contributes

to the nurturing of positive attitudes towards the subject matter. As rightly observed by Welsh (1989 cited in Onukaugu 1999: 149):

*When we get to the bottom line, teachers make or break a programme. If they believe in what they are asked to do, if they are given opportunities to verbalize and resolve their professional conflicts, if they are sufficiently trained, the programme will succeed. If those ifs are not met, interest in the programme will stop outside the classroom door (Onukaugu 1999: 149).*

Lastly, the study sought to find out about the role of parents in enhancing reading habits among the pupils. It is well entrenched in social psychology that parents and teachers play an important role in shaping the lives of their children (Ogula 1994: 7). A parent may actively and consciously encourage his child to learn a subject by monitoring the child's homework and generally helping him to succeed. This type of attitude and role is likely to influence motivation to learn the subject. If the child fails the subject he will feel some apprehension that his parents will reprimand him. But if the same parent has a negative attitude towards the subject, he is likely to transfer his negative attitude to the child. This is likely to generate doubts in the child's mind about the usefulness of learning the subject and so undermine his efforts to learn the subject. In addition, as pointed out by Clark & Amelia (2005: 14) parents' own literacy practices impact on the literacy opportunities for children and influence their reading, enjoyment and engagement. It is in consideration of this view that a number of questions relating to family reading practices and the role played by parents in enhancing reading habits in children were also included in this study.

## **1.9 Objectives of the study**

The study set out to achieve the following objectives:

1. Describe the present state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by focusing on its development.
2. Assess the role of head teachers and Kiswahili teachers in enhancing reading habits in school.
3. Examine the reading habits of primary school pupils in Kiswahili in Kenya both at school and at home by finding out their attitudes towards reading, measuring the amount of reading materials available to the pupils, accessibility of the storybooks,

the frequency of reading for pleasure and other activities that contribute towards enhancing of reading habits.

4. Assess the role of parents in enhancing reading habits at home.
5. Propose strategies for the improvement of reading habits among primary school pupils.

### **1.10 Research questions**

To achieve the stated objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. How has the language policy in education impacted on the development of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenya?
2. Are Kenyan pupils exposed to enough Kiswahili storybooks at each level of their studies in class and at home?
3. What are the reading habits of pupils both at school and at home?
4. How accessible are the storybooks to the children both at school and at home?
5. What strategies do Kiswahili teachers employ in the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili and Kiswahili language in the classes thus enhancing reading habits among pupils?
6. What role do parents play in enhancing good reading habits in their primary school going children?

### **1.11 Research assumptions**

This study on the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary school was based on the following assumptions:

1. Pupils in public primary schools are exposed to many storybooks written in Kiswahili.
2. Pupils have access to Kiswahili storybooks both at school and at home.
3. Pupils' reading is pegged on particular goals.
4. Kiswahili teachers concentrate more on teaching of reading but have made few attempts to explore the possibility of using literature as a vital part of the children's experience.

5. Parents provide good reading environment for children to develop and maintain reading habits in Kiswahili.

## **1.12 Rationale of the study**

The past three decades have witnessed an upsurge in the production of children's literature in Kiswahili written by Kenyans, and many of these books naturally reflect the African environment and draw from the rich traditions of folklore, riddles and proverbs. As already stated in the introduction, children's literature, when well developed, can effectively educate and entertain. In spite of this, the reading habits of children in Kiswahili have not received much attention in Kenyan scholarship. Most studies on children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenya have concentrated on textual analysis as in the works of Karuga (2005), Mukami (2005) and Muthubi (2005). The dearth of research on the reading habits and reading environment is a gap that this study hopes to fill. This study will furnish information on the literary practices of pupils in schools and at home and open up the field of children's literature in Kiswahili for further research.

The debate on Kenyans' reading habits is an old one. Most always the argument advanced is that Kenyan adults do not read enough. It has been said that most of the reading that is done is examination oriented, and this promotes rote reading (Ngunjiri 2007: 12) and that Kenyans in general give very little attention to books (Bindra 2007: 22). In the current hue and cry about reading habits, a scientific study needs to be carried out to evaluate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by examining their reading habits. The ability to read should be seen as being the heart of self-education and lifelong learning.

It was thought useful by the researcher to carry out an empirical investigation at this stage to determine the reading habits of pupils in Kiswahili and to find out if at all Kiswahili teachers are following the new directive to integrate the teaching of children's literature in Kiswahili and Kiswahili language. The aim of integrating the subjects was to encourage the development of a reading culture, to sharpen the learners' judgment and analytical ability and to create and promote a positive attitude towards Kiswahili as the national language.

Kenyan children are growing up in a modern world where those who cannot read will suffer academically and socially. The more one reads, the more comfortable reading

becomes and one is therefore able to take on advanced study and jobs that require facility with the written words and instruction. Reading is a skill that involves practice from an early age. More interesting, books that children want to read can result in better reading skills and greater success in confronting challenges of the twenty-first century. This argument necessitates the need for research to find out the reading habits of children and what is available in terms of reading materials for the children in Kiswahili in primary schools.

The study is also considered important because it suggests a framework for the development and enhancement of reading habits among children which is an important part of education of the child as is the learning of the basic skills of decoding. The positive and rewarding effects of recreational reading have been demonstrated in numerous studies. Reading skills are important throughout one's lifespan, particularly as one responds to new demands in life such as changes in jobs. Reading for pleasure or recreational has been found to improve reading comprehension, writing style and vocabulary (Elley 1992: 56). It is important to create young readers after all, the key to education is reading.

The study will not only be a contribution to the discipline of literature, but also a way of showing the relationship between language and literature and how language can be a vehicle for carrying out other categories of development. By drawing on the responses of the child, who is the consumer of the available reading materials and whose views are never sought, the study will have given prominence to the target reader whose feedback is important to those stakeholders in charge of availing reading materials to the child. Kenyan society cannot afford to ignore the contribution of children to the entire realm of human development.

Lastly, it is important to examine the role of teachers and parents in the whole issue of improving reading habits among children for teachers and parents play an important role in developing and enhancing reading habits in children. It is expected that, this study will stimulate thinking among teachers and lead them to review their techniques towards the integration of Kiswahili language syllabus and children's literature. The inclusion of parents in the study is founded on the idea that education is continuous inside and outside school and that parents are also contributors to their children's educational development.

The study may also help curriculum developers and implementers in revisiting the integration policy to ensure and enhance classroom benefits for the learners as well as instruction efficiency.

### **1.13 Scope and limitation**

The study puts more emphasis on children's literature within the context of the national language of Kenya which is Kiswahili. The role of Kiswahili as a medium of communication in the Eastern African region today and in future is enormous (Chimera 2000: 1). Other than being a subject in the school system, Kiswahili is regarded as a tool for communication between speakers of different indigenous languages. As a subject, Kiswahili is receiving a lot of attention on the Kenyan school curriculum and as a national language. Other than being allocated more hours of teaching than it was in the previous years, it is a compulsory and examinable language both at primary and secondary schools along with English. There is concern about its teaching and learning at all levels manifested by the mass of literature being published. All these point to the status and standing of the language and demand that the language receives attention that it deserves and more so at the primary level. For this reasons although other languages like English and mother tongues are referred to in this study, the major concern of the study is on reading habits of children in Kiswahili.

Children's literature is now being taught in both primary and secondary schools in Kenya. However, this study focuses on the reading habits of children in primary schools only. Although as argued by Davis (1988: 9) that primary school includes infant and junior aged children, this study will not cover infants or children in pre-schools because they are considered too young to be subjected to any form of interview. In addition, the study is not a study in how children develop reading skills, but rather how they use the skills acquired to cultivate and to become avid readers. Therefore, the study examined reading that is done for leisure by focusing on the school -.home connection.

Owing to the government policy of encouraging participation of private sector and communities in the financing and management of schools, the number of private schools has grown in the recent past and account for about eleven percent of the national proportion of schools and about one percent of enrolment (Nyamoata et al 2004: 24). Private primary

schools were also considered in the study to some degree. However, their results were not analyzed separately from those in public schools.

The study is confined to a total sample of 48 schools; 33 schools from Nairobi province and 15 from Lugare district in Western province. These two study areas were selected for demonstrative purposes considering that the child's environment and literary experiences can greatly influence his or her reading habits. The study did not include boarding schools because of the fact that it was not possible to get parents of the children in boarding schools to be interviewed. Neither did it include pupils from special schools such as the visually and hearing challenged children. Lastly, schools that did not have classes up to class eight were not considered because the study intended to have a whole picture of the reading habits of all the pupils from class one to class eight.

The data consists of data from two provinces in Kenya only; Nairobi and Lugare. Therefore, the data are not representative of the Kenyan pupils, teachers and parents in relation to their reading habits. The results of the data are not necessarily predictive of reading habits of children. However, the results of the investigation shed light on the reading habits of children in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya.

## **1.14 Literature review**

This section reviews previous studies on children's literature in general, children's literature in relation to pedagogy, literature on reading habits of children and children's literature in Kenya in English and Kiswahili.

### **1.14.1 Children's literature in general**

In most of the western countries for example, children's literature has received more attention than in Africa in general and Kenya in particular. Various studies have been undertaken to match with the large production of books for children in the western countries. The reverse has been the case with Africa and especially with Kenya which has had limited research on children's literature. For instance, a survey done by Musau & Ngugi in 1997 on the researches that were carried out in the Kenyan public universities in the Department of Kiswahili between 1975 and 1996 revealed that no studies were done in the area of children's literature (Musau & Ngugi 1997: 220). In fact children's literature is



not even mentioned as an area of study to be considered at the university level. In western countries, criticism on children's literature has been done on plays, drama and prose fiction for a long period of time now. Critics have been ready to review and evaluate books for children in order to give guidance to the reading public.

The great stride made in this field has appeared to encourage writing of more and better books for children and this proves the point of this study that getting to know what children read and want and how and why they read, what they read in Kiswahili in Kenya will improve the quality of children's books in Kiswahili and at the same time encourage the reading habits of children in Kiswahili in Kenya.

There have been critical works based on general historical and biographical surveys that trace the development of children's literature within given periods. One of this works by Peter Hunt (1994) provides a concise history of children's literature in Britain, focusing particularly on the past one hundred and thirty years. Hunt traces the evolution from moralizing, 'improving' works to books which are more empathetic to the world of the child. He also addresses key questions about the nature of children's literature: what makes it different from adult literature; how it is read by children and what critical responses an adult can appropriately make. Hunt acknowledges the many writers who through their commitment have moulded this literature to what it is today. Hunt's assessment of the terrain of children's literature will be of value in seeking to understand the history and issues involved in children's literature in Kenya in general.

Other critics have also concentrated on children's literature in general, but the following four are of particular importance to the present study. These are: Huck 1979, Chambers 1983, Tucker 1981, and Lukens 1982. They offer an illuminating work in the areas of criticism of children's literature, stressing the essentiality of criticism in all areas of children's literature, developing criteria for evaluation of the various kinds or genre of children's literature, discovering favourite books for children at various developmental levels and concluding that the adult must take the blame if the young child reads shoddy literature.

Huck (1979), for example, notes this of the American society and the need to help children become readers:

*As a nation, we have become so concerned with teaching the skills of reading that we have neglected to help children discover the joys of reading. I believe that children become readers only by reading many books of their own choice and by hearing someone reading literature of quality aloud with obvious delight and enthusiasms (Huck 1979: viii).*

Huck also shows how children's books can become an integral part of the curriculum through what she calls, "A cultural study of folktales" where, a study of any country may be enriched by the knowledge of its folklore and its traditional literature; while the contemporary realistic fiction could lead to a discussion of the social and moral issues which face our changing society. She also shows how historical fiction, informational books and biography books can help children become more thoughtful evaluators of the past and more critical thinkers through comparing various informational books and determining their accuracy and authenticity. Lastly she offers suggestions on how teachers, parents and the community can help children to enhance pleasurable reading. This work benefits this study because it suggests ways in which children's literature can be evaluated and presented to children.

Chambers (1983) discusses the education value of literature to children. His emphasis is on the importance of offering children a reading environment and discusses ways of presenting books to children. He asserts:

*If a child detects that no very strong value is placed on reading and literature by the adults around him- especially during the early stages of learning to read for him, then he feels no compulsion to develop his own reading skills, beyond the minimal, functional level we all need simply to carry out our daily lives in our print-dominated society (1983: 5).*

One of the issues that this study focuses on is the role played by parents in encouraging children to read beyond the classroom reading. Therefore, Chambers' suggestions on how to create conducive environment for children are relevant to this study.

Lukens (1982) undertakes to give special guidelines on children's literature to teachers by examining a wide range of the literature genres. Lukens aims to equip teachers who expect to work with children with the knowledge they need so that they may teach and recommend

the best of that literature to children. Teachers are helped to learn what makes children's book good - good enough to read aloud to children in the classrooms, to encourage reluctant readers to read and to enlarge children's world so that they will understand themselves and others. Other than discussing the various genres in children's literature, she also discusses aspects of style such as plot, characterization and language in children's literature. Lukens' work has informed this study in the area of what to look for when choosing books for children.

The foregoing review of general literature on children's literature reveals that although these studies are relevant to this study, they have mainly focused on other countries. There is need to find out what is going on in Kenya as regards children's literature in Kiswahili and in particular the reading habits of pupils in Kiswahili in primary schools.

#### **1.14.2 Children's literature and pedagogy**

Other types of studies take a more pedagogical attitude towards children's literature by discussing particular ways of getting books across to children. Green (1976), Hill (2000) and Tucker (1991) fall in this category. Green and Hill recommend ways in which children can be introduced to books. Some of the methods that they recommend include: reading aloud to pupils on a weekly basis, asking children to prepare reports, discussing books in class, illustrating stories, retelling the story, writing new endings to stories and having children describe their own experiences. Green goes on to suggest the need to have some annual events such as skits and plays, making bookmarks and book covers, puppet shows and storytelling. Teachers need to use more varied activities on a more frequent basis to make literature memorable. This again is relevant when it comes to proposing ways of introducing books to children in this study.

Tucker (1991) discusses children's literature in its more developmental aspects and examines ways in which it grows with and keeps close to children over the years in correspondence with their own changing imaginative and intellectual outlook. He assesses particular books and authors for their potential psychological appeal rather than for their literary merit. Even so, the discussion of the psychological appeal of any particular book often brings one very close to making literary judgments too, since literary sensitivity when writing for the young can also be described in terms of the skills with which an author

responds to various psychological and imaginative needs within his or her audience. He argues that each age group has a different perception of life and therefore should be presented with content that appeal to the level of their understanding.

Tucker recommends early fantasy and juvenile comics, adventure, struggle and heroism stories for seven to eleven year old. At about twelve years to fourteen, children are idealist and stories for this age-group usually reflect their audience's increasing pre-occupation with the need to acquire a consistent sense of identity. Stories that appeal to them will have characters with power, courage and loyalty that will be solving difficult problems. This categorization of content suitable for the various age-groups emphasizes the fact that children's literature has to address children's needs. Although this study will agree with this argument, it however takes note of the different backgrounds that most children in Kenya come from. This is so because one's reading background affects the choices of storybooks that they make.

#### **1.14.3 Literature on reading habits**

In Kenya, the discussion on reading habits has frequently been discussed for a long time and mainly focused on adults' reading habits (Chakava 1994, Mbae 2004, Bindra 2007 & Ngunjiri 2007). These discussions reveal a reading deficiency abounding in Kenya (Pawlitzy 2005: 1). They argue, for example, that many people do not read beyond the newspaper. It has generally been pointed out that Africans do not read beyond completion of their formal education unless it is for professional achievement (Chakava 1994: 37). This lack of voluntary reading habits has been traced back to the colonial education system, which emphasized education for achievement rather than education for life. In addition, it has been observed that cultural factors also play a role, in that African people in general derive more pleasure and communicate easily through oral and performing arts such as singing, dancing, music and drama. Communication with books is seen as a private entertainment which alienates the reader from his own community, whose best form of entertainment comes through participation in communal activities. In addition it has been observed that majority of the people live below the poverty line and cannot afford to buy books (Chakava 1994: 37, Pawlitzy 2005: 5). Most people struggle with the bare essentials of life such as food, shelter and clothing. Currently, lack of reading habits among

the high class people has been attributed to technological revolution; the television, computer, video, the internet and pod casting (Mwazemba 2009). Mwazemba observes that the electronic media has become more attractive to many Kenyans than books.

Although the discussion on lack of reading habits has occupied a lot of people for a long time now, Pawlitzky (2005) tends to disagree with this argument that Kenyans are not a reading people. Pawlitzky carried out her research on reading habits in Nyeri and Kisumu. Applying Street's 1984 (quoted in Pawlitzky 2005: 2) ideological model that sees literacy as a social practice embedded in the conceptual framework or world view of society, Street argues that literacy is what people do with it in different social contexts rather than one set of skills as there are multiple uses and functions of literacy within society. He therefore suggests multiple literacies within society, for example, print literacy, numeracy, media literacy, computer literacy, business literacy, etc. Based on this model Pawlitzky (2005: 5) sees Kenyans as having a reading culture because they read newspapers, magazines and also for examination purposes.

According to Pawlitzky, what is lacking in Kenyan context is not a reading culture as such, but a western type of it. She points out that what is required is a shift in focus away from the occidental ideal since there is a reading culture in Kenya that can be studied and described in its various aspects including usages, functions, type of reading and so on. She proposes that what is needed is to look at the various types of readers in Kenya. Although focusing mainly at the adult readership, Pawlitzky's research is relevant to this study in that it offers insight into the general behaviour of reading among Kenyans. She purposively excludes pupils and students on the assumption that they do read due to the requirement of the curriculum. However, this research aims at investigating the reading habits of pupils in Kiswahili both at school and at home on a voluntary basis.

On the contribution of schools towards developing reading culture, Mbae (2004) observes that most schools in Kenya exist for one reason only; to teach pupils and students how to pass examinations. He says that schools do not teach pupils how to read beyond examinations. He points out that, schools with their textbook oriented teaching method have contributed to the pupils and students hating reading instead of teaching them the art and value of reading. This has in the end led to most students considering school books as a form of enslavement.

Studies that deal with reading habits among pupils have also been carried out in other countries. This will help us understand what is known of children's reading habits in other places. For instance, Yilmaz (2000) carried out a research on, 'Reading and library usage of the students whose mother tongue is Turkish in Vienna-Austria.' Her aim was to identify in detail, the problem of reading and library use habits of students. Secondly, it was to find out the effects of these habits on their language development, educational achievements and consequently cultural adaptations. Her findings reveal that a majority of students do not have reading habits. Although a reading habit is not the single factor which affects the educational achievement of most students, her findings showed that there is a meaningful relationship between them. Finally her study observed that there is no direct impact on cultural adaptation of the children.

On the other hand, Torbien Weinreich carried out a research on 'Children's' reading habits and their use of the media in Denmark' (Weinreich 1993). His interest was to find out how much children read during their free time, what they prefer to read and how they read. His findings show that Danish children in the nine to twelve age ranges read quite a lot of books in their free time. Girls in this study were found to be reading more than boys. In addition, the results show that children whose parents read to them when they were small seem to read more books when they are older. Finally, regarding use of other media, the study showed that Danish children make considerable use of a wide range of other media such as radio and computer available to them.

Machet carried out a research on the reading habits of children in South Africa in 1997. He surveyed 877 students aged 12 to 16 (Machet 2001). The questions were designed to solicit feedback about how the students chose books, which genres they chose to read and their attitudes towards reading in general. Some of the key findings revealed that girls had a greater interest than boys in reading about body changes and issues of health. In addition, the study also found that interest in certain types of materials such as lists of facts and magazines increased with age. It was also revealed that girls read more than boys and the girls referred to themselves as "enthusiastic" readers. This is an indication that they read for fun as well as for study.

A similar study was carried out in Botswana by Adeyinka Tella and Samson Akande. In their study, they examined children's reading habits and the availability of books in

Botswana primary schools and considered its implication on the achievement of quality basic education in the country (Tella & Akande 2007). Using six research questions to guide the study, the results indicated that Botswana primary school pupils do not have a good reading habit and culture with only a third of the pupils reading on a daily basis; and that most of them read textbooks only for the purpose of passing examinations. Inadequate book availability, lack of interesting children's literature and watching television were identified as factors hindering pupils from developing reading habits.

Mabuza (2005) using reader-response theory carried out a study on the reading responses of six enthusiastic teenage readers in South Africa. Her aim was to explore whether the Siyagruva series of books published by New Africa Books from 2002 onwards, fill a 'gap'. The gap here refers to the gap in the teenage book market in South Africa that the New Africa Book Siyagruva series of books set out to fill when its first books were published in 2002. The gap also refers to the needs of South Africa teenage readers for books that reflect issues that interest them at this stage of their lives. In addition she set out to investigate reading preferences and choices among the teenagers. Her study reveals that the books do fulfil a need in the readers to read about 'real' issues and situations that reflect their own lives. She notes that the participants in her study liked the idea of a series of books with the same characters that they like and identify with. In addition the children find the appearance and style of the books appealing. This makes them want to read all the books in the series. Mabuza's study is insightful into how children choose books and why they choose specific books. Mabuza is motivated by a wish to encourage children to read and understand the factors that encourage children's reading.

Khaled Alazzi's study focuses on the perceptions of pre-service teachers towards children's literature (Alazzi 2006). His intention was to find out how the point of view of pre-service teachers affects their use of literature with students. Using Readers Response theory as his guiding theory, Alazzi describes the pre-service teachers' written responses to children's literature with geometric content. Alazzi notes that unless pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to experience a literature response appreciation to children's literature, they will not be able to translate that experience into a variety of opportunities with literature for their future students. Although Alazzi's work focuses on pre-service teachers' perceptions towards children's literature, it sheds some light in the application of Reader Response

theory, a theory that has been used in this study. Again the views of the pre-service teachers on children's literature are relevant when compared to those of Kiswahili teachers in this study.

Ann Jonsson and Josefin Olsson, carried out a research on 'Reading culture and literacy in Uganda: The case of the 'Children's reading tents in Uganda' in 2007. Their aim was to study and gain understanding of the two concepts of 'reading culture' and 'literacy' in the context of Uganda from a socio cultural approach to literacy. Their study was based on the 'children's reading tents project in three districts in Uganda. The concepts were examined in relation to both the people working with the 'Children's Reading Tents' and the participating children. In addition, their study focused on the needs of children as far as reading for leisure is concerned and how these needs can be met. Their study was carried out using interviews and observation of the activities taking place in the 'Children's reading tents.'

In their conclusion, they found out that, children in Uganda come in contact with one culture in school and one at home which they referred to as bicultural situation and bicultural mediation. These two cultures are connected by the adult informants through both literacy practices from school such as reading and writing, and indigenous literacy practices such as storytelling. They observe that a reading culture where the habit of reading in one's everyday life and not simply for school purposes is inhibited by the fact that reading is mostly connected with the culture in school. Their findings also show how 'Children's reading tents' can be used to enhance a reading culture among children in primary schools.

This study has benefited from these studies in that their documentation of the kinds of questions they asked in their questionnaire provided an insight into thinking about the kind of information that was needed in this study and hence the questions to ask the respondents. In addition the studies provide insight into the whole concept of reading habits among children. The present study seeks to make a contribution by filling up the void in the Kenyan context.



#### **1.14.4 Children's literature in Kenya in English and Kiswahili**

Critical writing and commentary on children's literature in Kenya has been meagre although there now seems to be a growing interest among literary critics. Interest in children's literature as a special discipline began around the 1970's (Odaga 1985). A few critics have responded to it with varying degrees of interest (Gachukia & Akivaga 1978). However it is important to note that most studies focused more on books written in English language than Kiswahili.

One of the pioneering studies in the field of criticism of children's literature in Kenya was championed by Asaneth Odaga in her B.A. thesis entitled 'Literature for children and young people in Kenya' (1974) and later published under the same title in 1985. Odaga examines the development of children's literature written in English in Kenya, which covers roughly what is suitable for children and young people from about the age of 8 to eighteen years. Odaga confined her study to literature written in English only, due to scarcity of books in Kiswahili at the time of her study. Odaga's study is informative in understanding the growth of children's literature in Kenya in general.

Other studies that have been carried out on children's literature in English in Kenya include: Gathiora (1979), Mwanzi (1982), Akoleit (1990), Kahenya (1992) and Oyoo (2000). Most of these studies focus on the thematic aspect of the stories written for children and children's response to the books they read. One other critic worth mentioning is Mpesha (1995) whose work contributes significantly to the field of children's literature in Kiswahili although her focus is on the growth and development of children's literature in Tanzania.

Mpesha examines children's response to literature through various types of responses: response through re-reading, dramatization and through writing. She focuses her survey on storybooks written in Kiswahili from the Tanzanian perspective. Mpesha recognizes the fact that literature for children is a powerful force in society; it is not just a record of social reality, but also a tool for socialization. Mpesha's study is an illumination in analyzing the response of the respondents in this study especially when it comes to examining why the pupils choose certain books as their favourites. Other than these, Mpesha's work provides a more detail picture of children's literature in East Africa from the pre-colonial period up to

1980's. Her work has been very useful to this study for it has contributed to the understanding of the response of children to what they read.

Studies on children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenya have been scanty. The few that are available include: Karuga (2005), Mukami (2005) and Muthubi (2005). Most of these studies have subjected selected children's books in Kiswahili to literary criticism. Karuga sets out to critically analyze form and content of selected storybooks used in primary schools in Kenya. She discusses factors such as style, thematic concerns and characterization and uses them to analyze the selected books. She recognizes the fact that it is through the style employed that a writer can communicate to his or her audience. At the same time she examines children's response to the books that they read. Her findings of the properties that children look for in their choice of books, benefits this study in the analysis of children's response to their favourite books. Karuga observes that properties such as illustrations, humour and characterization affect the child's choice of books.

Mukami's study of Ken Walibora's works explores style and how realism is realized in this author's books for children (Mukami 2005). Mukami demonstrates that Ken Walibora's creative works is a reflection of reality in the lives of children. Muthubi (2005) focuses her study on strategies used in books that have been abridged and simplified or translated and appropriated by children from adult readers. Such books include: *Alfu Lela Ulela*, *Mashimo ya Mfalme Sulemani* and *Mkasa wa Shujaa Liyongo*. Although Muthubi's work is not directly related to this work, it helps in showing why these books have managed to survive to the present and to discover the reasons for their lasting impact.

The literature review has revealed that there has been little criticism of children's literature in Kenya and in particular in Kiswahili. Even the works of criticism available have not examined the reading habits of children within the classroom and home environment at the same time showing the children preferences in their choices of storybooks. Thirdly, none of the studies reviewed was specifically concerned with parents, teachers and pupils' attitudes towards children's literature. Literature plays a crucial role in the process through which the child becomes assimilated into society. Kenyan children are exposed to various books, hence the need to examine what they read and how they read and their attitudes towards reading. This study therefore, fills the lacuna by examining the reading habits of children by examining the amount of storybooks available to them, their choices of storybooks and

also examines the role of other stake holders in enhancing reading habits among pupils both at school and at home.

## **1.15 Conclusion**

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to provide an overview of the study by redefining the role of children's literature in relation to the national goals of education. This was followed by the demographic set-up of the study area. An overview of language situation and the choice of Kiswahili as the national language have been discussed. The chapter has also offered information on the free primary education in Kenya, the development of primary education and language policies that have been put in place in Kenya since the pre-colonial period. In addition issues regarding mother tongue in education and the impact of *Sheng* on Kiswahili have been examined. The concept of children's literature and the need to have an integrated syllabus for Kiswahili language and children's literature has been presented. The chapter has also presented the statement of the problem, its objectives, the assumptions, rationale of the study, the scope and limitations and the literature review. The following chapter presents the development of children's literature in Kenya.

## **2 The development of children's literature in Kenya**

In this chapter, the study focuses on the development of children's literature in Kenya by tracing its growth from its oral beginning through the colonial period up to the current period.

Children's literature in Kenya has had to accommodate three value systems. Odaga (1985) describes these three phases of the development of children's literature in Kenya as: the pre-colonial or African traditional, the colonial and the emergent or the post colonial value system. Each of these phases is discussed to illuminate how they have affected the nature of children's literature in general and in particular Kiswahili in Kenya over a period of time.

### **2.1 Pre-colonial children's literature**

Pre-colonial children's literature, otherwise referred to as oral African literature is the old form of the Kenyan children's literature, and in consequence, the oldest form of Kenyan children's literature that was available to children (Njoroge 1978: 47). Long before the publication of novels, poems, short stories and plays, the oral literature acted as an extremely valuable source of information about African past and African philosophy of life (Njoroge 1978: 47). It also revealed the creative genius of the African artist. These traditions also revealed the integral connection that life has to art in African societies (Harris & Cornel 1993: 104). It should be noted that in all these, the communication and transmission of this genre was carried out through the various languages spoken by the various ethnic groups. It might be pointed out that in general oral literature was and still is part and parcel of the everyday life of the Kenyan people.

Nandwa (1994: 13) defines oral literature as, "those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree the artistic characteristic of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression. It consists of narratives, recitations, songs, dance, proverbs, riddles, similes, puns, tongue twisters, metaphors, idiomatic expressions, anecdotes, poems, hymns, drama, which are composed and performed orally to a live audience". All these forms manifest themselves differently in different cultures in terms of composition and structure. These oral genres are

literature because, like written literature, language is their medium of communication. Their artistry emanates from the fact that they move the audience by appealing to both their understanding and feeling.

Oral literature in Africa formed a part of the wider sphere of folklore. It encompassed the African, in this sense, the Kenyan way of life and they were passed on from one generation to the other (Njoroge 1978: 48). There are many forms of oral narratives, and narrators usually relate them with some implicit purpose in mind. Harris and Cornel (1993: 105) categorize them as: moralistic narrative, etiological, dilemma or enigma and historical narratives. Moralistic narratives, for example, instil certain values in children or reflect upon the importance of family responsibility. Etiological narratives were designed to explain how certain natural phenomenon came into being.

Dilemma or enigma narratives, teach children the value of thinking through complicated issues and making difficult decisions. Historical narratives, which can be etiological or mythical, generally explain how current state of existence came to be. They deal with the origins of society or man or the place of man in the universe and some explain present feature or behaviour of particular animals (Bertoncini 1989: 14). Historical narratives also focus on the heroic deeds, those that chronicle the extraordinary deeds of a king or a champion warrior. For instance, Chaka Zulu, Sundiata and Fumo Liyongo are three examples of heroes about whom extensive narratives have developed from in Africa (Harris & Cornel 1993: 105).

In addition to these, riddles and proverbs are forms that appear in African oral traditions. Riddles were used for purposes of entertainment or intellectual stimulation (Akinyemi 2003: 169). Riddles involve metaphorical interrogative statements or puzzles that must be resolved as fast as possible by the children (Njoroge 1994: 45). Riddles were used to overhaul the child's brain. They were therefore used to exercise the intellect and wit of the children. The participants displayed their imaginative power and sharp memory in answering the riddles, the answer to which they have to learn by heart (Finnegan 1976: 426). There are various types of riddles. For example, simple and complex riddles, riddle song, chain riddle, riddle analogues and riddle play (Njoroge 1994: 47). Riddles could be used to teach the geography of a particular region to children, or to train them in the history and culture of their people.

On the other hand, proverbs were and are still used to modify behaviour as in instructing wayward children, to comment on personality traits and to reflect on the conditions of life (Akinyemi 2003: 169). Proverbs act as important vehicles through which the attitudes and beliefs of people are expressed. Performance played an important role in the narrative and so made them more memorable and effective in moulding the young people (Akinyemi 2003: 170).

With its multi-faceted genres, children learnt the societal virtues of patience, honesty, obedience, hard work and generosity, among others. They also learnt about such vices as greed, disobedience and lies, and their consequences. The children learnt what society considered good and evil, how to relate to other people and how to care for the environment (Mbure 1997: 4). The different types of deterrence poetry was used during and after display of unruly behaviour to mock and discipline any child that violated a code of societal etiquette, be it stealing, lying or playing truant. This was seen as an effective means of censoring bad habits in children. In the end the overwhelming sense of shame not only compels the child involved to change, but also serves as a deterrence to others (Akinyemi 2003: 169).

Pre-colonial children's literature was not only valued because of its social focus and performance quality but for its aesthetic character as well (Nandwa 1994: 16). This literature was artistic, for example, it employed poetic language which helped to capture and sustain the child's interest. The oral artist also made use of repetition, imagery, similes and other stylistic devices to enhance the aesthetic quality of the narrative (Akinyemi 2003: 167). For instance, in an oral narrative there is repetition of words, phrases, incidents, episodes and even whole narratives as in the case of the twice told tales (Harries & Cornell 1993: 108). In addition, there is also repetition of songs that are incorporated into the narratives. These stylistic devices did not only serve to make the moral of the story more memorable, but through the creative language employed, the child's enjoyment of the story was made more certain.

Other than storytelling which enhanced their speaking skills, children had their own form of entertainment. They had games and verses for their own plays. These included: non-sense songs, singing games and catch rhymes (Finnegan 1976: 303, Akinyemi 2003: 167). The games were played for their own physical and mental development because in it, they

exercised their body parts. The game poetry has (for in some communities children continue to participate in this type of literature) elements of competition and rules which specify permissible interactions and, also specify methods of determining the losers and winners thus acting as checks for the children. In addition, because the games require a fairly large number of participants whose spirits of perseverance and tolerance are taxed to the fullest, they provide avenues for socialization and adaptation (Akinyemi 2003: 167).

The child's linguistic development was also attended to as a way of initiating him or her into the linguistic community through reinforcements, examples and precepts (Akinyemi 2003: 168). The purpose of tongue twisters was for the child's speech training. The tongue twisters are created to make the child sharp in his or her speeches. This means that a child who is going to be sharp will be clear and precise in his or her speech from childhood. Other than developing their linguistic competence, recitation of long poetic lines in musical form helped build vocabulary of basic words in their languages (Akinyemi 2003: 168).

Finally, children had special songs they used to sing when doing certain jobs (Finnegan 1976: 305). Special songs were associated with certain tasks. These included light-hearted songs sung by young boys who spent long hours and weeks in the rainy seasons in farms, scaring away the birds and animals from ruining the ripening sorghum or millet (Finnegan 1976: 305). Such literature is still wide spread in the villages today.

All in all the historical, economic, and social issues of the African society were effectively inculcated among the young generations through oral literature. The society's philosophy towards life and its relationship with neighbouring societies was aptly captured in narratives, poems, proverbs, riddles and even taboos. The fact that the themes and characters in certain oral stories are found in several cultures, attest to their universality and wide appeal. The tale's characters are archetypes that convey fundamental themes of human desires and feelings across the centuries and over the borders of nations.

Today oral literature can be seen as a background and source for written literature for children both in Kiswahili and English language. There is now a large collection of the why, how and what stories in both languages. Some folk stories interweave with present day circumstances, achieving both balance and bridge between old and contemporary (Killam & Rowe 2000: 65). Television and the radio which are the most popular forms of entertainment also make use of this genre. All these help to keep the oral tradition alive,

especially as they provide more ways by which young people can now discover and relate to their tradition.

The teaching of oral literature and Kiswahili language has been integrated in the Kiswahili syllabus for primary schools. The teacher of Kiswahili and oral literature aims to help the pupils to understand themselves as individuals, and as members of a community with a certain way of life. Teaching oral literature does not aim at helping pupils to not only understand the ideological position of the different genres of literature but also to show the way in which the society and the genres have changed. Oral literature is also part of language learning because it is an effective tool in enhancing listening and speaking skills.

## **2.2 Children's literature during the colonial period**

Colonialism in Kenya did not only affect politics and economics of the country, but also the social aspect, including African oral literature. With the advance of western education with its emphasis on reading and writing and its redefinition of schooling as a formal process outside the immediate jurisdiction of the tribe, came a new orientation in most traditional recitations of the oral stories (Killam & Rowe 2000: 64).

One important point to note is that despite the fact that the formal education system was first introduced by the missionaries, it does not mean that there was no education among Kenyans. All communities had their own form of education system before the missionary's formal education system was introduced in the country. In every community, it was the duty of the parents and the community to educate their children in matters related to social values, behaviours and attitudes. There were also certain technical skills and medical knowledge that was passed on to children in the community. Some of the skills included iron smiths, pottery, canoe making et cetera. The teaching of these skills was a responsibility of parents and the community as a whole.

In schools, traditional ways were jettisoned in favour of western ideas. School work had no elements of the traditional in it and was completely foreign to the Kenyan child who was taught to look down on any person without western education (Alembi 2007: 15). As a result the pre-colonial literature gradually relinquished its prominent role as the medium of instruction for the young African children. Its position was gradually taken up by the colonial literature.



Within the colonial period, one finds literature based on the Christian value system and the pure colonial literature that was introduced to the Kenyan children (Gachukia & Akivaga 1978: 40). Colonial literature is that kind of literature written by the colonizers for the white man (Gachukia & Akivaga 1978: 40).

The introduction of written material in Kenya dates back to the arrival of Christian missionaries nearly a century ago (Kola 1998: 55). The missionaries set up printing facilities mainly to print Christian materials for distribution to their new converts. These were mainly in Kiswahili and the indigenous languages (Chakava 1994: 6). This was a result of the missionaries recognizing the importance and value of these languages as means of propagating the gospel (Bertoncini 1989: 31). There was also a proliferation of wordbooks, multilingual dictionaries and vocabulary books. These were supplemented by books used in European schools and imported into African schools without modifications (Osazee 2004: 2). Some of the books that were used in primary school class included ‘Oxford Readers for Africa’ (Ngugi 1993: 34).

As pointed out by Ngugi, the stories in the books had characters that reflected the European culture. This means that during this colonial period, the African children in government and missionary schools were introduced to literature that was alien to their experience. The children were taught Mother Goose, Nursery Rhymes and about things they were not familiar with such as Little Miss Muffet eating her cud and whey, Mayday parade and snow and ice. In those days there were no refrigerators to give children an idea of what snow is. Osazee (2004: 2) observes that this was one of the reasons why African children did not enjoy reading these stories because the books were irrelevant to their needs. Achebe (quoted in Osazee 2004: 2) puts it more succinctly when he wrote about the Nigerian child:

*Before 1960 Nigerian children read nothing but British children’s books and had to be left to figure out what was meant by Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Trafalgar Square and the Thames. The poems he was forced to memorize talked about bleak and chilly mid-winter, snowflakes, men who galloped by whenever the moon and stars were out, great ports and swarming cities, and of course the Pied Piper – subjects and images which convey no meaning and no feeling to the average Nigerian (African) child in his natural environment.*

Although Achebe refers here to Nigerian children, this statement can be applied to many children in various countries of the African continent. This literature was based on foreign cultures. The children could not therefore, identify themselves with the characters in the books. It was, therefore difficult for most of them to appreciate the reading material since it was detached from their culture and environment. The unfamiliar settings and images are some of the critical issues in children's books.

According to Alcock (2005: 407), the first children's books in Kiswahili were produced in 1901. They were mainly Sunday school texts which emphasized on Christian literature, for example, *Kusoma Kwa Watoto Kwa Siku ya Jumapili*. These Sunday school service books in Kiswahili were produced by Christian Knowledge Society. Other than the Christian material, books in Kiswahili for children were written by other Europeans such as Isabelle Fremont who wrote *Paka Jimi* (1945) and *Mbwa Tomi* (1947). These books were widely used in primary schools because they had an African setting, characterization and themes. But like colonial literature, most of them failed to evoke and bring out an authentic, genuine African spirit and also failed to formulate the sort of image that children and young people in Kenya needed at that time. The children needed an image that was not imported and which they would readily emulate.

On the other hand, the kind of literature produced by the colonial masters slighted Africans, thus it was prejudiced and biased. This kind of literature sought to expose and explain the primitiveness and savagery of the black man (Khorana 1994: xiv). It served the express purpose of teaching the white society that Africans were no better than animals. This kind of literature was used as propaganda, either to boost or to destroy the image and dignity of the African people.

Children were also introduced to the kind of literature that perpetuated myths and misconceptions about the geography, social organization, people's culture and civilization of the African people by stereotypical themes, characters and plots in books about Africa (Khorana 1994: xiv). This kind of literature demonstrated ignorance and lack of local experience on the part of the European writers. Through this kind of literature, children were conditioned to regard the non-white population of the world as composed not only of inferior but of conquered people who were destined to remain subject to the economic and social domination of those who have dominated them (Ngugi 1978: 13). Africans exposed

to colonial literature would end up suffering from an inferiority complex because of the lies of this literature. A superiority attitude led the white people to prescribe the kind of literature African children were to read and the songs they were to sing, totally disregarding the fact that the Africans had their own literature (Khorana 1994: xx).

Colonial literature had a distorting effect on the psyche of the African child because it ignored the experience of the African child and his world. Alembi (2007: 15) refers to this period as a period of constricting and suffocating the African oral literature. The suffocation also happened at the language level. That all the books were in English means the children were conditioned to see English as a superior language. Conversely, they were made to see their own languages as inferior-and speaking in them was a mark of inferiority.

Preference for imported children's literature reflected the Eurocentric preoccupations of the colonial educators just as westernized values and ideologies permeated the structures and process of schooling, so too imported literatures embedded themselves in the curricular fabric of school life (Alembi 2007: 16).

Under these circumstances, the commercial market for indigenous literature remained limited because, for one, most African children did not go to school and few could read. The major commercial market for children's literature was in schools and colonial schools had set very clear parameters as to the kinds of books they wanted. The resulting disadvantage was circular; the production of indigenous children's literature was not viable, therefore the authorship of literature was discouraged; in consequence, reliance on imported literature was further entrenched (Chakava 1998: 42, Killam & Rowe 2000: 66).

Despite all the negative comments that can be made about colonial literature, there is need to recognize the work done by numerous missionaries and anthropologists who collected, transcribed, translated, recorded and composed folktales such as folk stories, proverbs, riddles, myths, songs and poems from various regions of Africa (Mazrui & Mazrui 1995: 340, Bertoncini 1989: 12). For example, in Kiswahili, Jan Knappert, Karl Buttner and Karl Velten studied the diaries of travellers and put them together to obtain a coherent picture of traditional stories. According to Bertoncini (1989: 13), some of the early collections of Kiswahili tales include: *Swahili Tales, as told by Natives of Zanzibar* by Edward Steere (1970), and *Kibaraka, Swahili Stories* by University mission, Zanzibar (1885) among others. Many of these translated tales exhibited Arabic influence. Many of them have

become so deeply rooted in Kiswahili literature by the Swahili people themselves such that they are no longer treated or even perceived as something alien (Bertoncini 1989: 19). Bertoncini observes that modern Kiswahili literature feeds upon these ancient stories as if created by the Swahili proper. For instance, she notes that *Adili na Nduguze* by Shaaban Robert was framed using the fairy tale of 'The Story of Abdalla ibn Fadhil' from the *Thousand and One Nights*. For the next hundred years these stories would be the main subject of Kiswahili books in print (Bertoncini 1989: 31).

Some of the stories that were translated during this colonial period included; *Hekaya za Abunuwas* (first published 1935); *Alfu Lela Ulela* (Johnson and Bren 1922), *Mashimo ya Mfalme Suleimani* (F. Johnson 1929), *Mashujaa: Hadithi za Wayunani* (C. Kingsley, 1929), *Safari za Msafiri* (Bunyan 1888), *Hadithi ya Allan Quatermain* (F. Johnson 1934), *Safari ya Gulliver* (F. Johnson) and *Elisi katika Nchi ya Ajabu* (Conan-Davies, 1940) (Mkangi 1884: 340, Mudamulla 2001: 173).

When Kiswahili literature started to be written by Africans in the 1940's and 1950's, after the standardization of the language (Mbaabu 1996: 69), writers like Shaaban Robert, wrote *Adili na Ndunguze* (1952). Later, in 1960 *Kurwa na Doto* written by Muhammad Saleh Farsy was published (Mazrui 1984: 340). These two authors were from Tanzania and Zanzibar respectively. However these storybooks were also used in Kenya Bertoncini (1989: 35) points out that the majority of African writers of this period can be considered as didactic-moralistic writers who were preoccupied with expressing their moral messages that they relegated aesthetic considerations to the background.

Although most of these books were not meant for children at that time, they have now been appropriated by children as the education system progresses and they are used in the class as supplementary readers. One can say that this was an attempt in effecting changes in literature so that it could suit the children in Kenya. Most books in Kiswahili were published after the approval of the Inter-Territorial Language (Swahili) Committee that was set up to standardize Kiswahili in 1930 (Mbaabu 1996: 68).

## **2.3 Post-colonial children's literature**

With independence in Kenya in 1963, many people hoped things would change fast, particularly with regard to culture. However, colonial literature continued to co-exist with

post-colonial literature during these early years of independence (Gachukia & Akivaga 1978: 43).

Three categories of literature have been identified within this period (Khorana 1994: xxii, Ngugi 1981: 15). First, there was the good European literature, the product of the most sensitive minds of European culture such as, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and Ibsen to mention a few (Ngugi 1981: 15). These represented the best and the most refined tradition in European culture and thought. However, their definition of social reality was rooted in their European history, race, culture and class. When they talked of human conflicts and tensions, the human condition and the human anguish, they were talking of these tensions and conflict and anguish as expressed and emerging in the European experience of history. As a result the African child was daily confronted with the white image in literature (Ngugi 1981: 15-16).

At the primary level of education, storybooks such as *Sammy Going South* by W.H. Canaway; *The Thirty Nine Steps* by John Buchan; *The Gorilla Hunters* by R.M Ballantyne; *Mystery and Suspense*, edited by A.J. Arkley were used (Gachukia & Akivaga 1978: 43). In addition, books by some of the best western children writers such as Enid Blyton whose books are popular with children of all ages were also found in primary schools (Gachukia & Akivaga 1978: 43). These books were known for their richness in variety and they made exciting and interesting reading in English. Enid Blyton's books are still popular with pupils in primary schools. There were also many abridged and simplified books on varied topics with plausible themes and settings. However, the benefits derived from them were of little or no cultural value relevant to the African children.

The second body of literature had a distorting effect on the African child's psyche. These are those books that continued with the colonial tradition of glorifying white superiority over the Africans. Some of them talked of very irrelevant issues which were unfamiliar to the African child. Also in this category, one finds literature that tried to define the colonized world for the white colonizers. This was as Ngugi (1981: 16) puts it, "down-right racist literature and made no effort to hide it". It included the works of writers such as Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mine*; Rudyard Kipling's *The Mowgli Stories*; Robert Ruark's *Uhuru and Something of Value* and Nicholas Montserrat's *The Tribe that lost its Head*, among others (Ngugi 1981: 16).

The third category of literature was aimed towards an African image-formation. This category of writers was committed to addressing the issues of negative self-image among African children by publishing books that offered positive, accurate and reader able lessons from the history of the African man (Khorana 1994: xxx). This literature was written by those Africans whose aim was to re-interpret and re-define African man from the African point of view, with the express purpose of re-asserting African pride and dignity (Odaga 1978: 44).

Long after independence, there still were no official policy guidelines on what children should read and what they should not (Alembi 2007: 15). However during the early periods of independence, pressure was mounted against the colonial literature. It all began by a need to decolonize the literature syllabus. The Kenyan education administration and teachers agreed with the Kiswahili proverb that states, “Muacha Mila ni Mtumwa” (He who abandons his / her culture is a slave) (Nandwa 1994: 14). The debate to Africanize the literature curriculum at the University of Nairobi was spearheaded by eminent scholars such as Taban Lo Liyong, Okot p’Bitek, Owour Anyumba and Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Ngugi 1982: 42). They called for a strong cultural bias in literature for adults and children. The main objective was to make the core of the literary studies Afro-centric rather than Eurocentric as they had been in the colonial period.

This was as a result of an intellectual climate that firmly insisted that children’s literature should change (Chakava 1998: 42). A number of African writers came up with many works of literature for children and young people in the form of short stories, novels, drama and poetry, with varied themes and topics written mostly in English and a few storybooks written in Kiswahili and mother tongue. They wanted the problems of colonial bias in school curricular and textbooks addressed. There was need to develop and publish books with a suitable African content. Some took as their themes the contemporary issues that arose, as a result of colonialism and conflicts created by interaction between the western cultural value system and the African traditional set up and conventions (Gachukia & Akivaga 1978: 45). For instance, some authors explored the effects of urbanization on the traditional structures of indigenous life. These include authors like John Buyu who wrote *Mtugen* (1971) and Leo Odera Omolo’s *Hadithi za Kusisimua*, while others opted to focus on topical issues of the time. Unlike fiction in English in which themes relating to Mau

Mau experiences were written, in Kiswahili literary writing, this dramatic period hardly exists (Bertoncini 1989: 77). Only two novels deal with Mau Mau uprising: *Kaburi bila Msalaba* by Peter Munuhe Kareithi and *Kikulacho Ki Nguoni Mwako* by Peter Ngare (Bertoncini 1989: 78). *Kaburi bila Msalaba* has been recommended for use in class seven in primary schools (Ministry of Education 2007: 104). These themes were seen to be familiar to the children and young people of Kenya at that time. The stories portrayed characters that children and young people would easily identify themselves with.

Others embarked on the collection of folktales in an attempt to renew the oral traditions of the African heritage. The aim was to ensure that young African people born in the shadow of colonialism should understand and appreciate the literary mythology of their own more ancient inheritance (Killam & Rowe 2000: 65). At the heart of all such works was the desire to provide African children with an Afro-centric view of the world, one that may balance and rectify the cultural, ideological and other content of non-African texts (Khorana 1994: xxx).

Nonetheless, it should be noted that those who were advocating for the localization of literature did not do it for the sake of Africanizing everything. Rather the idea was that it was important for the young people to start education by reading literature about what was familiar and closest to them, before they moved to literature of the world.

However, in the early years of independence, the publishing industry was dominated by overseas firms like Oxford, Macmillan, Longman, Heinemann and Evans Brothers (Ogechi & Ogechi 2002: 170). They propagated a new form of colonialism that determined what Africans could read or write. Since the multinational companies were in Africa to make money, they focused mainly on textbooks where they were assured a ready market for their products or they published only those indigenous writers and books that would sell internationally. Under such circumstances, the indigenous literatures remained limited.

On the other hand, the new government administration was busy targeting the expansion of universal primary education. Therefore, their material resources were stretched. Funds were injected into the construction of schools and basic equipments of the classroom (Khorana 1994: xxx). Kiswahili was badly affected since it did not get any support from the government and other stake holders. This was because of the language policy that was in

operation during that period of time (see 1.5.3). Again even if books were available, most parents did not have money to purchase books for reading.

In the 1980's and 1990's many indigenous publishing firms were established in Kenya. For example, East African Publishing House resulted from the indigenization of Heinemann in 1982 (Chakava 1998: 42) while Longhorn Kenya emerged in 1992 through the localization of Longman (Njoroge 1998: 47). The role of these publishing houses was crucial because it enabled the local production of relatively low cost texts. This was also another way of enabling Africans to write for Africans and not for foreign publishers. With that, children's books in English, Kiswahili and in indigenous languages began to be published especially by the East African Publishing House (Chakava 1998: 42). Some of the titles in the indigenous languages included Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Njamba Nene*, *Mbaathii Mathigu* and *Njamba Nene na Cibu King'ang'i* and *Bathitoora ya Njamba Nene*; Francis Imbuga's *Lialuka Lya Vaana va Magomere*; David Mailu's *Kaana Ng'ya* and Asenath Odaga's *Ogilu Nungo Piny Kirom* (Chakava 1998: 42)

But before this, children had little opportunity to read and develop a reading habit from an early age (Ogechi & Ogechi 2002: 172). This had a great impact especially in Kiswahili language due to scarcity of books published in Kiswahili.

Currently, in many of the publishing firms found in Kenya one finds a number of important series of readers for English and Kiswahili for young people. For example, Phoenix initiated the successful 'Phoenix Young Reader' for English and *Hadithi za Kikwetu* for Kiswahili. In addition, it also launched its first Kiswahili Audio Books in 2005; Longhorn has *Utamu Kolea*; East African Publishing House has a series in Kiswahili at three levels: *Vitabu vya Paukwa* (up to age 7), *Vitabu vya Nyota* (for age 7-9) and *Vitabu vya Sayari* (for age 10-13), also the *Tusome kwa Furaha*; Oxford University Press has *Mradi wa Kusoma* while Longhorn has *Sasa Sema*. Other publishing firms have also contributed to the publication of children's books in Kiswahili. Moreover, the policies announced by the government which are geared towards localization and curriculum reviews have provided further opportunities for local authors and publishers.

However, it was not until the implementation of the 8-4-4 system of education in 1985 that, books for children in Kiswahili began to be published in great numbers. This was because



Kiswahili was made compulsory at primary and secondary school level (Mbaabu 1996: 131). This created a need for more books to be published. Neither was there enough books written in the local languages. Indeed to write in one of the local languages would be seen as accepting a low readership. This again has its reasons in the language policy and the attitude people have towards African languages.

However, the publication of books was still skewed against Kiswahili. Writing on 'The reality and challenges of publishing in Kiswahili in Kenya', Ogechi (2002b) notes that of all the books in print by 1997, those in Kiswahili formed only 21.7 %. Kiswahili general readers consisted of only 22.3 % while those in English formed 77.4 % of the total number of publications (Ogechi 2002b: 29). This state of affairs arises from a number of factors the most important of which is the country's skewed national language policy (Ogechi 2002b: 230); an uninspired community of literary artists and lastly the lack of a patronizing reading public with a keen interest in Kiswahili literature (King'ei 2000: 89). In addition as pointed out by Bloch (2008: 275) storybooks in any language have long been labelled and viewed as 'supplementary materials' by the educational establishments, and therefore deemed irrelevant for the literacy learning process. Many players have contributed to this situation: publishers as well as educational officials at different levels of the system have exacerbated things by overemphasizing the development and promotion of the use of textbooks containing teaching methods that at best offer restricted language texts. These factors caused a barrier to the development of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenya.

With the government taking over the responsibility of providing storybooks to primary schools and the change in the syllabus to include children's books, there has been a great increase in the number of books published in Kiswahili. Since the inception of Free Primary Education in 2003 and the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili syllabus in 2002, children's books in Kiswahili have grown in numbers. Kenya Institute of Education has taken a positive direction particularly in vetting books to be included in the 'Orange Book' which is the official list of textbooks and readers approved for Kenyan schools. This list is then circulated to all schools in order to make teachers aware of the books that are available in the market. The schools' Textbook Selection Committees (STSC), using this list, will select titles for all pupils and any others for the teachers' reference materials.

There has also been a major boost in the field of children's literature in Kenya in general due to the fact that it is now studied in Literature department as well as Kiswahili departments of most public universities in Kenya. In addition, there are book-fairs which are organized by the Kenya Publishers Association every year. These book-fairs have been an arena for promotion of children's literature in Kenya in general and in particular books written in Kiswahili. The Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature organized by the Kenya publishers Association also has a children's literature category for stories written in Kiswahili. Other than awarding prizes to the best three authors, which is an incentive to them it is also a way of promoting children's books in Kiswahili.

In addition, the media in Kenya has also played a great role in the growth and development of children's literature. For instance there are programs on radio and local television stations that focus on children's literature especially the oral literature where children listen to stories being told by either the children themselves or some adults. *Sunday Nation* for example has set aside a section known as 'The Young Nation', where it runs stories that are sometimes written by the children themselves. This section also has space set aside for reviews of new books that have been published for children.

Children's literature is now beginning to get recognition as a unique discipline with as much critical focus as adult literature. This effort to improve the quality of children's literature calls for a need to investigate the status of children's literature in primary schools in Kiswahili in a systematic way, especially at the present time when there is hue and cry that reading for leisure has become a low priority to most Kenyans ( Bindra 2007: 22). The achievement of quality education in Africa calls for development of good reading habits of both children and adults (Tella & Akande 2007: 117).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the development of children's literature in Kenya. It has shown that children's literature in Kenya has had to accommodate three value systems that have impacted on its growth whether positively or negatively. Against this backdrop, discussion of the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools becomes more comprehensible. What is notable here is that children's literature within the post colonial period is seen as exhibiting more sensitivity to the child and also the experiences that

inform him. Children's literature written after this period and during the current period has tried to give the child the opportunity to be himself and to have the right to his feelings and thought by not imposing upon him adult ideas. These developments in the awareness of the child and his world have been largely caused by critical works relating directly or indirectly to the sphere of children's literature. The following chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks adopted for the study.

### **3 Theoretical framework**

This chapter outlines the theoretical frameworks upon which the study is based. In examining reading habits among pupils in primary schools in Kenya, the study relied on a combination of theories; the Cognitive Development theory by Jean Piaget (1950). This is in view of the fact that, the literary competence of any child depends on his or her cognitive development and other factors in life. Cognitive Development theory is very helpful in helping us to understand the process of growth and changes that take place in the child and young people.

The study also operates within the framework of Social Learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977). This helps us to understand how the environment shapes the child's reading behaviours. Finally, the Reader Response (RR) theory based on Louise Rosenblatt's (1995) 'Transactional Reader Response' approach is applied here in order to understand how children react to the various texts that they come across. The approaches were not applied separately but rather intersected in a bid to give a comprehensive analysis of reading habits in Kiswahili among primary school pupils in Kenya.

#### **3.1 Cognitive Development theory**

Cognition means thinking, and cognitive theories are about the ways in which children come to think about, know and understand the world around them (Greig & Taylor 1999: 28). Cognitive development theory was developed by Jean Piaget (1896-1980) who was part philosopher and part biologist and Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) (Marshall 1984: 13, Greig & Taylor 1999: 28). The two theorists regard the child as an active participant in constructing knowledge. Although they agree that both biology and environment are important, they vary on the emphasis they place on each one.

As a philosopher, Piaget was interested in questions on the acquisition of knowledge, such as what is learning? Are things the way they appear? (Huitte & Hummel 2003: 1, Grieg & Taylor 1999: 28). He believed that what distinguishes human beings from other animals is the ability of the human being to do 'abstract reasoning' (ibid). As part biologist, Piaget was interested in describing and recording, in a systematic fashion, the various types and stages of thought which children go through as they develop (Greig & Taylor 1999: 28).

Piaget revolutionized people's thinking about child development and besides his considerable output there is a massive literature on the subject of Piaget's theories by critics, supporters and those who have experimented with, expanded or attempted modification of Piagetian concepts (Marshall 1984: 13).

The study of child development is a vast one, and therefore this study has selected those aspects which are important in aiding the researcher to understand children and how they develop. Piaget has given detailed accounts of children's intellectual development and although his conclusions have not been fully accepted (Davis 1988: 2, Huitte & Hummel 2003: 1) his theory remains useful to this study.

One important idea proposed by Piaget is that intelligence develops as a result of the interaction of the environment and the maturation of the child (Huck 1979: 22). Piaget's cognitive theory asserts that there are regular patterns in cognitive development which are experienced by everyone.

According to Piaget (1950), children pass through stages in mental development which although varying considerably between children, provide a general trend of development. Each stage has its sets of achievements in spatial, number, quality, time, moral, chance and probability concepts, which Piaget considered demonstrated the growth of logical thought. The close of a stage is marked by a partial equilibrium, in which the developing thought processes become consolidated into a structure. This cognitive structure is both the final achievement of one stage and the entry point of the next (Davis 1988: 16). An understanding of such a pattern allows this study to predict for an individual child his or her mode of comprehension all a long on the course of his or her development.

Piaget believed that infants are born with mental blueprints called schemas. These schemas are the primary mental organization and structure through which the child adapts to the environment (Wanda et al 1997: 1, Greig & Taylor 1999: 28). Some of the earliest schema include the sucking and grasping reflexes which through adaptation, gradually become more complex schemas. This is achieved through two adaptive processes of assimilation and accommodation.

Assimilation is the encoding of incoming information to fit what the child already knows about the world (Wanda et al 1997: 1). For example, this is observed when a child

spontaneously sucks anything that might be a nipple (Greig & Taylor 1999: 28). Assimilation occurs when new experience is treated as though it was identical with the old and is incorporated into the unchanged scheme or schema (Davis 1988: 17, Melgosa, 2002: 37). It is the process of using or transforming the environment so that it can be placed in pre-existing cognitive structures (Huitte & Hummel 2003: 1). This means that a child assimilates what she or he hears, sees and feels by accepting new ideas into an already existing set of schema. For example, a random hand movement that results in grasping an object comes to be used intentionally to grasp other objects. This schema of action is an act of intelligence, the coordination of goals and the means by which goals can be attained (Marshall 1984: 13).

In accommodation, the infant has to gradually reorganize the existing schema to meet the challenges of the environment. Accommodation is thought to take place when the child perceives a discrepancy between new and old experience and the schema enlarges as a result (Davis 1988: 17, Melgosa 2002: 37). Accommodation therefore is the process of changing cognitive structures in order to accept something from the environment (Huitte & Hummel 2003: 1). It involves the modification of existing schemes to fit new information or ways of understanding of the world (Wanda et al 1997: 1). When this happens, adaptation is then said to occur. This means that when a child is confronted with a new problem or activity, he makes use of previous patterns of behaviour in order to resolve the issue at hand.

Both of these processes are used simultaneously and alternately throughout life as the child increasingly adapts to the environment in a more complex way (Wanda et al 1997: 1, Huitte & Hummel 2003: 1). Huck (1979: 23) observes that books can be a real source for assimilation of knowledge. Literature may give rise to the accommodating process as children see themselves or their world in a new light. When new insights are developed, the child is accommodating.

Piaget refers to the early stages of development as the operation and this is fully realized in adolescence as equilibrium. Full equilibrium is achieved when the child becomes able to reason with hypothetical and deductive logic. This final logical, abstract reasoning begins at around 12 years. However, some younger children may show evidence of some specific

capacities of logical thought. Before this, the child's thought process will have undergone many changes (Melgosa 2002: 37).

Piaget identified four major stages in cognitive development: the sensory-motor stage (from birth to year 2), the pre - operational stage (age 2-7), the concrete operational stage (age 7-11) and the formal operation stage (age 11 and beyond). These stages form what Piaget calls an invariant development sequence. That is, all children progress through the stages in exactly the same order in which he lists them. There can be no skipping of a stage because each successive period necessarily builds on the preceding period and typifies a more complex way of thinking.

#### *Sensory-motor stage (from birth to year 2)*

The stage is so called because the infant learns through his or her senses: eyes, ears, nose and skin (Marshall 1984: 13). It is the earliest stage of cognitive development. At this stage, the infant comes to know his world through the senses and motor behaviours from primitive reflex actions. The senses become the child's primary means of intellectual development (Melgosa 2002: 35). Early action patterns become coordinated, and more refined and elaborated towards major achievements of this period, thus the concept of the permanent object is created (Atherton 2005: 1). This object underlies all the later concepts which will be attained, and is the first evidence of emergent logical reasoning. At this level, there is evidence of memory abilities, and by the end of this period, the child is able to represent experiences in play and the beginnings of language (Huck 1979: 22). Parents and teachers who understand these changes can plan to interact with their children in a way that adequately corresponds to age and intellectual needs. Huck (1979: 22) and Melgosa (2002: 44) suggest that at this stage children should be exposed to songs with actions or games that will make them more stimulating thus making the child feel more motivated to explore these activities for themselves. In addition, they also suggest that the child can be introduced to illustrated books in which there are pictures of objects, people or animals accompanied with verbal messages that the child will soon learn to repeat.

#### *The Pre-Operational stage (Age 2-7)*

For some children this is the stage when they start to attend pre-school from 4 to 5 years. Piaget characterized this stage by animism, realism and egocentrism, which means that

children think inanimate objects are alive, that dreams are real physical events and that everyone sees things the same way they do (Greig and Taylor 1999: 29). During this stage the child is learning to construct classes, things and people and is developing early understanding of relations (Davies 1988: 17). Some of the relational pre-concepts that he develops are big and small. He uses these concepts as standards to measure against self. He learns to represent his world symbolically through the medium of language, play and drawings (Huck 1979: 23). At the same time, memory and imaginations are developed (Huitte & Hummel 2003: 1). Through play, exploration and social interactions, using all features of the environment, which Piaget called aliment or nourishment for the intellect, the child constructs functional categories (Huck 1979: 23).

During the sensory motor level, the child's games were nothing but exercises. But at this stage, they become symbolic play representing something by means of something else. Imitation can now take place in the absence of that which is being imitated (Marshall 1984: 43). The child's developing language is another symbolic function that increases the flexibility of the intelligence by enabling thought to range over space and time (Marshall 1984: 43).

The pre-operation child has not yet learnt to conserve. Conservation is the realization that objects or sets of objects stay the same even when they are changed about or made to look different (Atherton 2005: 1). For instance, if liquid is poured from a short wide glass into a tall narrow glass, the liquid has been transformed in shape, but its liquid property stays constant. If the level of the liquid has changed, the child thinks that the quantity has changed. This means that the child can only reason on the basis of what he sees at the beginning and end of the operation. He cannot reason about the transformation. A child who conserves can hold an idea or image constant in his mind regardless of how much it is changed in form (Huck 1979: 22). This according to Huck (1979: 22) explains why children at this stage enjoy cumulative stories. The repetition in these tales carries the sequence of the story along for them.

Another characteristic at this stage is the egocentric thinking. Egocentric here does not imply that the child is selfish rather that it means that the young child is not capable of assuming another person's point of view (Atherton 2005: 1). The child sees everything from his or her own perception. A child at this level responds well to stories that he or she



can identify with the major characters, and in which the plot or theme closely resembles his or her own actions and feelings (Huck 1979: 24).

#### *The Concrete Operation stage (Age 7-11)*

This stage coincides with the period of compulsory education for most pupils. However some children will still show thinking more typical of the preceding stage, while other brighter children will be well advanced (Davis 1988: 18). At this stage, objects can now be classified according to their similarities and differences and they can be serialized according to their progressive size and weight (Marshall 1984: 43). The concept of number, which is another form of seriation, is learned (Atherton 2005: 1).

Although the child can now reason about a transformation and conserve quantity, the operation is still concrete. The child still lacks logical inference. Objects have to be present to be reasoned about. However, the ability to represent experience, and what is known in language terms, is developing rapidly. The language acquired helps in the formation of concepts.

At this level their response to literature changes. Characterized by thought that is flexible and reversible, children in this period can accept stories within stories. Flashbacks and shifts in time periods can be understood as children begin to project themselves into the future or past. Shifting from an egocentric pattern of thought, children in the concrete-operational period can more easily identify with different point of views. Most of them can readily put themselves into a position of another person (Huck 1979: 24). Children especially enjoy theatrical plays in which they participate (Melgosa 2002: 137). For this reason, drama becomes an important and enjoyable source of learning that can play a positive role in learning.

#### *Formal Operation Stage (Age 11 and beyond)*

It occurs at about 11 years or early adolescence. Piaget emphasized the intellectual aspect of adolescence as a growing phase of intellectual development (Melgosa 2002: 19). This stage gives each individual the mental skills necessary to understand the complexities of knowledge. It is characterized by the ability to reason about objects that cannot be seen, to predict future events, to plan for tomorrow or next year. This stage of mental development brings the child into the mental world of adulthood just as the completion of pubertal

changes heralds the arrival of physical adulthood (Marshall 1988: 46). It must be noted that physical and mental changes continue throughout life, but this completion of pre-adult developmental processes brings the child to the threshold of the adult world where adult physical and mental activity is possible. According to Huck (1979: 25) the child can now hold several plots or sub-plots in his or her mind and see the interrelations among them. He or she can think about the form and pattern of reasoning, as well as its content. This is why the period is referred to as the period of formal thought.

Piaget also found out in his research that children not only reasoned differently from adults but also that they had quite different world views, literally different philosophies. He argues that young children think in ways not quantitatively but qualitatively different from adults (Huitte & Hummel 2003: 1). This means that we must acknowledge the uniqueness of children in their psychological and conceptual make-up. If we allow for this, according to Tucker (1976: 179) then we shall be closer to understanding young children's choices. The literature they are given should match their psychological and conceptual development.

Piaget's detailed account of intellectual development is intrusive and reliable in aiding this study fathom a child's province of discernment. The last two phases of Piaget's theory are important in that these stages shape children's cognitive, affective and emotional development. An understanding of a child's development is indeed a prerequisite to understanding how they react to books. The researcher is able to tell if the children were faithful to themselves in the choice of books that they made and again if the teachers were faithful in the choices they made for children with regard to the child's intellectual capabilities.

Fostering enjoyment and appreciation for literature comes from knowing the age and psychological disposition of children, those dispositions that cause a child to like a particular book (Huck 1979: 20). Without knowledge of children, how they learn to think, feel and behave, choosing books for them and creating habitual readers from them could prove to be a futile job.

Child development approaches have contributed knowledge about children that provide certain guidelines for selecting books for children (Huck 1979: 20). New developments

have occurred in the research in children's cognitive growth which has direct application to the way children develop reading habits and the choice of books they make. Changes take place in every area of development: thought, language, social, emotional and physical aspects of the child's life. These affect the way children experience their world and construct their models of reality. What children fear or delight in changes too, and so do the preoccupations of childhood.

### **3.2 Social Learning theory**

The Social Learning theory developed by Albert Bandura (1977, 1986, and 1992) has its roots in Ivan Pavlov's (1849-1936) learning theory (Greig & Taylor 1999: 27, Marshall 1994: 72). Ivan Pavlov was interested in the way in which certain biological events become systematically related to changes in the environment. According to Pavlov, an event makes an impression on the senses and evokes an impulse to respond to the stimulus of that event. Without learning, the stimulus and response are unconditioned, that is they are natural. When the response is modified by learning, the response has become conditioned, that is, learned (Marshall 1994: 27).

Bandura's Social Learning theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of others (Website <http://tip.psychology.org/bandura.html>). He pointed out that there were other ways of learning apart from direct reinforcement. For instance, children learn a whole range of behaviours through observation, such as how to care, hit others etc. Parents and others serve as role models of behaviour. Bandura called this observational learning or modelling. This means that children not only learn from reinforcement and punishment that they receive but also from those given to their models for their behaviour.

Bandura points out the role that thinking or cognition plays in the mediation of social learning (Greig & Taylor 1999: 27). There are several ways in which the child's own thinking intervenes between the observation of the behaviour and its imitation. Firstly, the child needs to 'attend' to the modelled behaviour. Secondly, the child must learn to retain the behaviour. Thirdly, the child must 'retrieve' and reproduce the observed behaviour. In addition, the child must want to, or be 'motivated' to reproduce the observed behaviour.

Social learning theory acknowledges how behaviour changes across situations depending on stimuli and reinforcement as well as the child's experience within situations. Social learning theory takes to a certain extent, account of social, emotional and motivational factors which potentially influence a child's behaviour, learning and development.

The implication of this theory in the study is that it will consider the availability and nature of role models in the child's reading life.

### **3.3 Reader-Response theory**

The study also included aspects of Reader-Response (RR) theory based on Rosenblatt's Transactional Reader-Response theory (1939, 1995). RR was useful in establishing the responses of children to the storybooks that they read. The tenets were applied in an endeavour to ascertain how children respond to storybooks.

Purves & Beach (1972: 36) define 'response' as the ongoing interaction between the individual and a literary work. They note that this kind of interaction may continue long after the individual has finished reading a book. They further define response as interest, appreciation and taste, or conversely boredom and rejection. They argue that response can be revealed indirectly through observation of works preferred or rejected by the individual.

Reader-Response criticism is a group of approaches to understanding of literature that explicitly emphasizes the reader's role in creating the meaning and experience of a literary work. In other words, RR is not a unified theory but rather it encompasses a variety of approaches (c.f. Bressler 2003, Cuddon 1991, Knowles 1996). These approaches have been organized under five headings by Tyson (1999). They include: transaction reader-response theory by Loise Rosenblatt, affective stylistics by Stanley Fish, subjective reader-response theory by David Bleich, Psychological reader-response theory by Norman Holland and social reader-response theory associated with the later works of Stanley Fish (ibid: 157). These critics focused not only on literary per se but readers or audiences responding to a literary work (Knowles 1996: 559). RR was mainly formulated largely in the area of adult literary experience. But in the recent past it has been taken up by researchers interested in young readers and their books in order to understand more about literature and its young readers (Benton 1999: 83).

Generally Reader-Response theory is concerned with the relationship between the text and reader and reader and text (Cuddon 1991: 770) with the emphasis on different ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives which arise in the relationship. RR theory is concerned with the reader's contribution to a text.

RR suggests that in his book, an author creates a relationship with a reader in order to discover the meaning of the text (Chambers 1990: 92). Therefore in essence, literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates his or her own unique text-related performances. This is so because all readers bring their own emotions, concerns, life experiences and knowledge to their reading thus each interpretation is subjective and unique.

Attention to the reading process emerged during the 1930s as a reaction against the growing tendency to reject the reader's role in creating meaning (Church 1997: 1, Tyson 1999: 154). RR challenged the text-oriented theories of Formalism and New Criticism of the late 1930's through 1950 in which the reader was given a relatively powerless role, with the main emphasis on the correct interpretation of the author's message as explained by experts or on learning the correct cultural values (Cuddon 1991: 770). For instance, New Criticism advocated for close reading and detailed textual analysis of a work of art rather than an interest in the mind and personality of the poet, source, the history of ideas and political and social implications (Cuddon 1991: 770). It emphasized that only that which is within the text is part of the meaning of a text. All that mattered was the text itself; no contextual or historical knowledge, no hint of the author's intentions gleaned from other sources were allowed to interfere with the search in the text for the meaning. Any associations brought to a piece of literature from prior knowledge were seen as dangerous, offering the reader the possibility of an easy way out of the interpretative struggle (Robinson 1997: 21).

On the other hand, Formalism was primarily interested in the way that literature texts achieve their effects and therefore establishing a scientific basis for the study of literature. For them, human content in literature such as emotions, ideas, reality did not possess any significance in defining what was specifically literary about a text (Cuddon 1991: 770). Both New Criticism and Formalism approaches concentrate on the literariness of the

formal devices of a text and underestimate the reader's role. The fact that readers are extremely varied in terms of class, gender, history and culture does not seem to be significant. For instance, children's experience to literature varies depending on a child's exposure to literature.

Webster (1990: 27) argues that one reason why little explicit emphasis was given to the reader and the dynamics of reading is that readers "have often been thought of as least significant elements in the author-text-reader axis". This was because the role of the reader was largely unproblematic and therefore not requiring any examination or explanation. Unlike the attention given to authors and texts, readers were thought of as passive receivers. In an author-centred criticism, the assumption is that the author is both the origin and object of literature and interpretation (Cuddon 1990: 27).

RR critics argued that, "a text, whatever it be, for example a poem, short story, essay and so on has no real existence until it is read," (Cuddon 1991: 351), its meaning is in potential and it can only be completed by it being read. The reading is complementary, it actualises potential meaning. Thus the reader does not have a passive role as has been traditionally thought and accepted; rather on the contrary, the reader is an active agent in the creation of meaning. By applying codes and strategies, the reader decodes the text (Cuddon 1991: 351).

What is clear about RR theorists, despite their divergent views of the reading process is that they share two beliefs: (1) that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and (2) that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature (Tyson 1999: 154). Their chief interest is what occurs when a text and reader interact or transact. For instance, the second belief that readers actively make meaning suggests that different readers may read the same text quite differently. In addition it suggests that even the same reader reading the same text on two different occasions will probably produce different meanings because so many variables contribute to one's experience of the text (Rosenblatt 1995 (first published in 1939): 35, Tyson 1999: 154).

Transactional RR theory was formulated by Louise Rosenblatt in 1939 (Church 1997: 1). Louise Rosenblatt asserts that both the reader and the text must work together to produce

meaning (c.f. Bressler 2003: 60). She operates on the principle that the text cannot be said to have a meaningful existence outside the relationship between itself and its reader(s) (Benton 1999: 84). Rosenblatt views the reader and the text as partners in the interpretative process. She uses the term transaction to mean the contribution of both the reader and text (Rosenblatt 1995: 27). The reader and the text participate in or share a transactional experience. In other words, Rosenblatt concentrates on an analysis of what actually happens when one is reading (Benton 1999: 84).

According to Rosenblatt, the text acts as a stimulus for eliciting various past experiences, thoughts and ideas from the reader; those found in both the everyday existence and in the past reading experiences. These responses influence the way in which we make sense of the text as we move through it. At various points while we read, the text acts as a blueprint that we can use to correct our interpretation when we realize we have travelled too far a field of what is written on the page (Rosenblatt 1995: 26, Tyson 1999: 158). Through this transactional experience, the reader and the text produce a new creation, a poem (Rosenblatt 1995: 34). A poem in this sense refers to the reader's construction of a text (Church 1997: 2).

Rosenblatt sees readers reading for different purposes: for efferent and aesthetic purposes (Rosenblatt 1995: 32-33, Beach & Hynds 1991: 463, Bressler 2003: 60). Reading for efferent purpose means that the reader is focusing on the information contained in the text. What interests one in this process is the information that he or she will get from it. On the other hand, when one engages in aesthetic reading, one experiences a personal relationship to the text that focuses his attention on the emotional subtleties of its language and encourages the reader to make judgements (Tyson 1999: 158). By so doing, one notes its very words, its sound, and its patterns and so on. In this way, if one takes the commonly held principle of literature by seeing it as an art, then the purpose of art as evoking affective response is seen in its beauty and its emotional and imaginative power as one reads it (Bressler 2003: 60). This therefore means that, when reading aesthetically, one is involved in an elaborate give and take encounter with the text.

According to Beach & Hynds (1991: 463) these two stances taken by readers towards literature and reading in general have been found to influence the elaboration and quality of responses. For instance, readers with negative attitudes towards reading or towards reading

particular texts may be reluctant to bring the full range of the interpersonal knowledge to literature. This is one aspect that is important to consider in particular when dealing with children's reading behaviour. Children will react differently to texts depending on their interest in books.

Without an understanding of the reader, one cannot predict what particular text may be significant to him or what may be the special quality of his experience (Rosenblatt 1995: 35). Hence it is important to consider some of the factors that may mould the reader's response to literature.

RR theory has not gone without objections. By holding that for one to understand the literary experience or the meaning of a text one has to examine the process that readers use to create that meaning and experience, they have been accused of being subjective, allowing readers to interpret texts in any way they want (Fox 1996: 601).

In their defence, RR proponents argue that in order to explore someone's literary experience, one must ask the person reading the text. They do accept the fact that reading is both subjective and objective because all readers bring their own emotions, concerns, life experiences and knowledge to their reading but their interest is to deal with the question of how it is done and not what. In addition, they agree that RR does not mean that any and all interpretations are valid or of equal importance (Bressler 2003: 63). In most cases one finds boundaries and restrictions which are placed upon possible interpretations of a text. These interpretations vary depending upon how a critic defines the multiple elements of the reading process. For example, Fish (1980: 14-15) argues that "readers are not at liberty to interpret text in any way they choose, but that they are controlled by an interpretive community".

The above criticism notwithstanding, the development of RR studies has seen the momentum shift periodically from literary theory to educational enquiry and practice, particularly in children's literature (c.f. Mora & Welch 2008, Vandergrift 2007, Benton 1996/99). For instance, Mora and Welch (2008) posit that language art teachers now do accept widely the central tenets to the theory of RR, particularly the notion that learning is a constructive and dynamic process in which, students extract meaning from texts through



experiencing, hypothesising, exploring and synthesizing. Most importantly, they see RR as a way of encouraging students to be aware of what they bring to texts as readers.

Further, Vandergrift (2007) observes that RR helps students to recognize the specificity of their cultural backgrounds and to work towards understanding the cultural backgrounds of other students. In addition, using RR in the classroom can have a profound impact on how students view texts and how they see their roles as readers. Through this approach, students can learn to construct their own meaning by connecting the textual material to their own lives and describe what they experience as they read instead of relying on a teacher to give them a single standard of interpretation of a text. By so doing, students in RR classroom become active learners because their personal responses are valued. They begin to see themselves as having the authority and responsibility to make judgements about what they read. The interaction with other students, helps them move beyond their individual reactions to take into account others' ideas and interpretations, thus broadening their perspectives about issues. What students need, according to Vandergrift (2007) is an adult intermediary who can help develop and maintain the interpretative community and to ensure that each participant finds both private and public space within the community of readers.

In support of RR in relation to children's literature, Benton (1996: 74) says that children as readers should not be viewed as being *Tabula Rasa* but that they too bring their idiosyncratic knowledge and personal style to the act of reading. According to Benton (1996: 71) the importance of RR in children's literature lies in the answer it provides about two fundamental questions, one which is about the literature and the other about its young readers:

- Who is the implied child reader inscribed in the text?
- How do actual child-readers respond during the reading process?

Most of the approaches to children's literature, which set out to answer the above questions focus on children's response mainly to fiction and poetry, picture books, with the broad aim of improving the understanding of what constitutes good practice in literature teaching. Other approaches employ RR methods in order to explore children's concepts and social attitudes to reading. Benton (1996: 81) sees this group as falling in the category he calls

‘culturally oriented studies’, which explore how literature can be helpful in teaching about issues emerging in the society and those that consider it in the context of the broad range of the children’s interests.

Benton (1996:74-85) summarizes RR in relation to children into four interrelated areas:

- The development stages of reading. This focuses on studies of what teenagers like to read in relation to their developmental phase.
- The process of response. This involves comparing how children and adults respond to a text and how children respond to fiction.
- Different styles of reading and reading behaviour. This aspect involves examining appeals to series writers and how individual readers make their own meaning from what they read.
- Presentation of themes on multicultural studies. Focus is placed on responses of readers of different cultures to texts and on readers in relation to their environment.

Taking into account the child as the reader, is according to Chambers (1996: 91) very important because it helps critics to understand a book better that is, the kind of book it is and the kind of reader it demands and to discover the reader it seeks to address.

In summary therefore, RR can be applied to a wide area of children’s responses to literature with the broad aim of improving our understanding of what constitutes good practice in literature teaching and also used to explore children’s concept and social attitudes towards reading. In this study, Transactional Reader Response theory is employed to examine and explore the reading habits of children in Kenya. As Huck (1979: 737-738) observes, the child’s response is significant in the assessment of children’s books. The child’s choice of and response to a book indicates those factors that appeal to him. It is even more important to get a child’s response because generally the books he or she reads are those recommended by adult patrons in the first place. His reading is determined by his own interest and of his/her peer group. This theory emphasizes the variety of reader’s response to a work of art. It is associated with the reader, the reading process and response. The child in this case becomes the best critique of what she or he reads.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Three types of theories have been suggested in this study; the Cognitive Development theory by Jean Piaget, Social Learning theory by Albert Bandura and Transactional Reader Response theory by Louise Rosenblatt. The pivotal role played by the three theories is one of helping the researcher to examine reading habits of children by taking into consideration their cognitive developments, and how children come to learn by way of observing reading behaviours of those who take care of them and finally exploring their response to the books they read. In the following chapter, the method used in data collection is explained.

## **4 Research methodology**

This chapter focuses on the methods used in data collection. First, it gives an overview of the areas of study by briefly looking at the socio-economic activities of these areas in order to understand how they contribute or inhibit reading habits among pupils. Next, it explains the sources of data for the study, which include primary and secondary data. The chapter also discusses the types of primary schools found in Kenya, the target population, the study sample and the sampling procedures in order to show how the researcher arrived at the choice of the sample and the population used. In addition, the instruments used for data collection, data collection procedure and data analysis and presentation are discussed.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by examining the reading habits of pupils both in school and at home. Reading habits were measured in terms of the amount of reading materials available to pupils both at school and at home, the accessibility of the reading materials, the pupils' attitudes to reading, the frequency of reading for pleasure and any other activities that pupils engage in that contribute to enhancing and maintaining of reading habits.

Other than focusing on storybooks in Kiswahili alone, the study was interested in other relevant literature that aim at encouraging reading among children such as newspapers and magazines. The study also set out to examine the role of other stakeholders such as head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and parents in enhancing reading habits among pupils in Kiswahili at primary school level.

### **4.1 Study area**

The research was carried out in two different districts in Kenya: Nairobi which is the capital city of Kenya and Lugare district which is found in the Western part of Kenya and considered as rural. Only two districts were selected out of the more than seventy districts found in Kenya. This was in order to cut down on costs and to make proper use of the time given to carry out the research. In selecting these two areas, the socio-economic factors, geographical condition and level of development were considered. As observed by Pawlitzky (2005: 4) reading does not take place in a social vacuum. Reading as a social activity is embedded in specific social settings, which have an impact on it. The urban-rural

divide means that members of these two communities lead different lifestyles and have access to different resources. For instance, the economy and purchasing power will more or less determine the capability to buy reading materials and engage in the practice of reading.

Nairobi district was chosen as the area of study because it has a multi-cultural and multi-economic set up which offers a rich resource for differing insight into the study. Secondly, given the limitation of time, and other resources including transport, the researcher had to choose an area that was easily accessible.

Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya as well as a province. Residential areas in Nairobi have a history of racial segregation (Bunyi 1996: 129). In the colonial days, there were Africans, Asians and White areas. African families lived in small one-room houses in the African-only East lands. The Asians lived in big family groups in very big houses in their Asian-only areas. On the other hand, the colonial masters lived in the more sparsely populated areas where the ground space for individual homes was big enough to allow for growing of trees, extensive flower gardens and lawns. The only Africans living in these areas during the colonial days were those working as domestic servants or watchmen for the colonialists. Africans started moving into these areas prior to attainment of independence. Nairobi is divided into eight administrative divisions. These are: Embakasi, Dagoreti, Kamukunji, Kasarani, Langata, Makadara, Starehe and Westlands. Most of the up market suburbs are situated to the western part of Nairobi, where most European settlers resided in colonial times. These include areas such as, Karen, Langata and Lavingtone. In the western outskirts, Kangemi and Dagoreti areas are inhabited by non-wealthy residents. However areas like Parklands and Westlands are considered rich. Most low and lower middle income estates are located in eastern Nairobi. These include estates such as: Dandora, Kariobangi, Huruma and Embakasi. One also finds middle income class earners living in Buruburu and Donholm.

The Nairobi community is made up of people from different ethno-linguistic backgrounds because most of the people are, in a sense economic immigrants. Most people in Nairobi grew up in rural villages in Kenya speaking their mother tongue and only learned English and Kiswahili in schools or for some at their places of work. However, one finds a generation of people who were born and brought up in Nairobi. For some of this new generation, Kiswahili has become their first language and for most youth *Sheng* is the

language of communication. Generally, a majority of people living in Nairobi speak Kiswahili when communicating with their fellow residents from other linguistic communities or with some of their family members.

There are a variety of houses in Nairobi. Some people live in large houses built on big compounds usually bungalows; while others live in maisonettes built on smaller compounds. Others live in apartments and flats that are built in the form of housing complexes on one plot of land. Most of the houses are permanent, built of stone and roofed with clay bricks. The houses have from one to four bedrooms, a sitting room and in some cases a dining room. Other facilities like kitchens, bathrooms and toilets are also found in these types of structures. Television sets, radio and video cassette players, music systems used as entertainment targets can be found in most houses. In very low in-come areas, one finds only rooms with facilities like toilets and bathrooms built outside the houses. These facilities are shared communally. There are also slum areas in different parts of the city like, Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru Kwa Njenga. These areas have limited social facilities like toilets and good houses.

Economically, Nairobi is mostly made up of people who are in paid employment or running their own businesses. In many families, both husband and wife are in paid employment or running family business together or separately. But the social economic status of people in Nairobi varies. In whichever estate one lives, some parents have relatively higher incomes than others. At the moment, the population of those who are not employed is increasing by the day as people move from the rural areas to look for jobs in the city.

Being the capital city of Kenya, one finds a range of print products available either in the bookshops, super markets, on the streets within the town centre or in the estates. These products include children's books, adult books, newspapers and magazines both Kenyan and foreign. The main local newspapers available in Nairobi are The Daily Nation, East African Standard and Taifa Leo. The Daily Nation and The Standard are currently being sold at Ksh.35 for the daily papers and Ksh40 for Sunday papers. While the *Taifa Leo* is sold at Ksh.30

At the educational level Nairobi has a total of 325 primary schools with diverse levels of standards. There are schools situated in the slum areas that are contrasted with the high standards of education in schools in the city and the outskirts of the city.

Lugare is a district that was created in 1997 from the major Kakamega district and is one of the seven districts in Western province. The current Lugare district was originally a settlement scheme that was created at independence within the framework of Kenya's land settlement program which involved land transfers from the British Settlers and farmers to indigenous or naturalised Kenyans. It was later acquired through the Settlement Fund Trustee in the 1960s (Gisemba 2008). Being a settlement scheme, the district inhabitants are predominantly small scale farmers who are speakers of various dialects of the luhya language and other Kenyan languages.

Luhya is a Bantu language spoken in the western part of Kenya. Osogo 1965 (quoted in Kobia 2008: 1) notes that before 1940, there was no name like Luhya. The term 'Luhya' was coined and introduced in 1940 when the Abaluhya Welfare Association was formed and the term was further strengthened when the Luhya Language Committee was established. Since then the term has been used to refer to this group of people. Before this, they were called Wakavirondo (Myers-Scotton 1995: 21).

Although there is no single luhya language, there are several mutually understood dialects. These Luhya dialects include: Bukusu, Khayo, Marachi, Saamia, Nyala K, Nyala B, Wanga, Marama, Kisa, Nyore, Logooli, Lwisukha, Lwitakho, Kabras, Tiriki, and Tachoni. Nyala B refers to the Nyala group that lives in Busia district while Nyala K refers the Nyala group that inhabits Kakamega district (Angogo 1980: 4). These dialects display different degrees of intelligibility. As noted by Myers-Scotton (1995: 21) the Luhya people refer to themselves and their speech by their dialectical names. Within the district one also finds speakers of other languages like the Kalenjin, and Kikuyu.

Missionaries began work in the Luhya area in the first decade of the twentieth century, with Friends African Mission arriving first in 1902 and settled at Kaimosi (Myers-Scotton 1995: 21). They were followed later by many other groups such as the Christian Missionary Society, Church of God and the Catholic group (Myers-Scotton 1995: 21). As regards publication of primary books in the few selected dialects, a number of reading materials had been published as early as 1950s (Myers-Scotton 1995: 22).

The main economic activity of the inhabitants of Lugare District is subsistence farming, and hence the lives of the members revolve around farming activities of digging, planting, weeding and harvesting. Maize is the staple food crop of the people. It is the most important food crop followed by beans, bananas and various vegetables. Some keep a few cows for milk, both for home consumption and for sale. Even those people, who are in other forms of paid employment, engage in some farming activity in addition. Employed people look at the farm and the income from their jobs as supplementing one another. Paid employment for people in Lugare is of two kinds: those employed in Lugare or those employed outside in other towns as clerks, drivers, teachers, nurses, secretaries and other types of officers either in government or private offices. There are also people who run small businesses such as in village shops.

Most of the houses that people in Lugare live in are built of mud and corrugated iron sheet or grass. These are mostly 'I' shaped structures with the table room in the middle and a bedroom on either side. A variation of this is the 'L' shaped structures where the horizontal part of the 'L' is an extra room. Most people in Lugare cook their meals on a three stone fire with firewood as fuel. Those who are well to do use charcoal stove or paraffin stove. The three stone fire smokes a lot and most kitchen, are black with soot. The kitchens are usually built as separate structures from the main house.

However, a few people build themselves houses using stones. The houses are commonly referred to as permanent houses. The design of such houses, again depend on the means of the owner. The humble ones have the same design as the 'I'-structure, whereas the more sophisticated ones have more rooms. There is no electricity in Lugare so most people use lanterns for their lighting.

Although most people have radios, batteries are expensive. Radios are only switched on when they want to listen to news at certain selected hours. So children are not allowed to switch on the radio anyhow. Very few people own television sets. There is a scarcity of newspapers in Lugare. In order for one to get one, they have to depend on friends who are travelling to the nearest town which is thirty kilometres away.

Other than the houses that people have built for themselves, one finds that most schools are also built using mud and roofed with iron sheets and bare earth floors. Schools with



permanent buildings are few. Those that are permanent, have windows with no glass - windows or doors. Lugare has a total number of 112 public schools and 25 private schools. Means of transport in this area is generally poor. However, most people use and hire bicycles popularly known as *Bodaboda* as means of transport.

## **4.2 Sources of data**

Data for the study was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included various immediate stakeholders especially with regard to children's literature in primary schools in Kenya: head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and parents and the pupils themselves who are the consumers of the storybooks to describe the present state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya. Members of these groups were interviewed to give insight into the habit of reading of children in Kiswahili in Kenya. Responses from these sources gave us sufficient evidence to draw conclusion and make recommendations. The study targeted subjects from both rural and urban contexts.

The secondary source consisted of literature pertaining to primary education in Kenya in general and the development of children's literature in Kenya and reading habits among children. This information was sought from relevant written records; books and articles in journals on, language use in schools, reading habits of children, literary response to literature, literary criteria and how to introduce books to children. These were read in order to supplement and enhance the field research.

This study worked within the framework of qualitative and quantitative research methodology to analyse data. The qualitative framework intended to capture the living experiences of the participants in order to understand their meaning perspective, as it went beyond the statistical results of the study (Janesick 1994: 218). On the other hand, the quantitative method was utilized in order to capture the statistical aspect of the study. Descriptive analysis was the method of analysis used in this study

## **4.3 Categories of primary schools in Kenya**

In Kenya, primary education is offered to children between the ages of six and fourteen years (Ministry of Education 2004: 2). However with free primary education in place, the age of children has gone up as far as eighteen years. In 2007 there were an estimated 8.3

million children enrolled in about 18,901 primary schools in the country (Sifuna 2005: 1, Republic of Kenya 2007). The teacher pupil ratio in most schools by the year 2005 was 1:50 (UNESCO 2005: 6). There are two types of primary schools that are formally recognized in Kenya; public or government aided and private schools.

Public government schools constitute the largest proportion of schools in the country. The distinctive features of these schools are that the government is responsible for payment of teachers' salaries and provides for textbooks and other reading materials. To improve retention, school feeding programs have been introduced in schools situated in Arid and semi Arid areas (ASAL), urban slums and some poor areas where the majority of the vulnerable children live (Ministry of Education 2004: 7, Nyamoita et al 2004: 14). These schools also receive support in terms of supervision, curriculum development, and pedagogical development and in some schools the non-teaching staff salaries are met by the local authority or the city council or county councils. Most of these schools were initiated through the *Harambee* (Self-Help) initiative but were later taken up by the government. Involvement of the community includes construction of school buildings.

On the other hand, private schools are owned by private entrepreneurs, companies, churches, trustees and other recognized bodies. The proprietors finance and manage the schools mainly through school fees paid in by parents and contributions from the sponsors. They are therefore diversely resourced depending on location, ranging from well funded elite schools to poorly-funded schools. Some of the private schools can be found on private premises within the estates (Nyamoita et al 2004: 14).

The two types of schools described above are registered by the Ministry of Education and are expected to comply with certain minimum conditions in terms of teacher qualification, norms and standards, lengths of school day, health standards, inspection and physical infrastructure standards (Nyamoita et al 2004: 15). Pupils in all the primary schools in Kenya learn Mathematics, English, Kiswahili, Social Studies and Science. In some private schools, foreign languages such as French are taught. In addition computer lessons are also offered in some public and private schools that are found in middle and high class areas.

#### **4.4 The target population**

The target population for this study was all the primary school pupils in the country together with their parents, teachers and head teachers. However since it is impossible to interview all the primary schools in Kenya, the study had to settle for the accessible population. It is believed that this accessible population is similar to the target population in its most important general characteristic such as age, gender, educational background and provision of books and in all the more specific features that are known to be significantly related to the items included in the questionnaire (Dornyei 2003: 71). This means that the accessible population and the target population are comparable on many characteristics which are important in the study.

#### **4.5 The study sample**

In order to select representative sample that will show the reading habits among pupils and hence the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya, it was necessary to include the following groups of pupils:

- a) both boys and girls
- b) both rural and urban pupils
- c) wide ethnic representation
- d) pupils from high, middle and low socio-economic backgrounds
- e) pupils from public and private schools

The study was based on 210 public and 115 private schools in Nairobi and 112 public and 25 private schools in Lugare district of Western Province of Kenya as the target population. However, the total accessible population was 33 primary schools from Nairobi and 15 primary schools from Lugare district.

The subjects interviewed were head teachers, Kiswahili teachers, pupils from class one to eight and parents who have children in the selected schools from Nairobi and Lugare district in Western Kenya. The two districts were selected purposively for two reasons; one is the availability of time given for the study. Considering that Kenya has more than seventy five districts (Republic of Kenya 2007), it is not possible for the research to be

carried out in all the districts. Secondly, the selection is based on the social-economic potential of the two districts. Nairobi has been selected to represent urban areas while Lugare district will represent the rural schools category. It should be noted that the social-economic status of an area or a district or a province largely determines its economic potential which consequently, influences the poverty levels, basic infrastructure and to some extent, academic performance (UNESCO 2005: 6). In addition, the two different districts were selected because children from different regions have varied reading tastes depending on the environment that they are brought up.

Although children in both urban and rural schools are taught using the same syllabus, there are certain linguistic, social and economic issues that impacts on their reading habits. For instance, access to such social amenities as libraries, bookshops, and frequent book exhibitions may not be readily available to the rural children compared to the urban children who live in an affluent neighbourhood which is well serviced with school books and libraries. However, despite these differences all public schools are supposed to buy reading material with funds provided by the government, therefore it becomes necessary to find out if these books are made accessible to the children for their leisure reading. Schools were selected on the basis of their different features in view of representing the various types of schools thus public schools and the private schools.

#### **4.5.1 Study sample from Lugare District**

According to the Ministry of Education report, Lugare district has a total number of 112 public primary schools and 25 private schools (Republic of Kenya 2007: 52). To select the subjects who were to be involved in the study from Lugare district, several sample designs were utilized. This being more of a descriptive study, the researcher opted for a 10% sample of the accessible population which according to Mugenda & Mugenda (1999: 47) and Dornyei (2003: 73) is adequate for this kind of research.

In the first stage the study employed systematic random sampling technique to select twelve public schools from a list of schools which was provided by the Ministry of Education. Systematic random selection was applied here because it is believed that most of the rural public schools in this area share almost the same characteristics as far as provision of educational equipments is concerned. In systematic random sampling, every

kith element in the total list is chosen systematically for inclusion in the sample (Barbbie 1998: 213). In this study every 10<sup>th</sup> public school was selected from the list of schools provided by the Ministry thus twelve schools were selected.

In selecting private schools, purposeful technique was used. This was because most of the private schools in the area did not have upper classes. Therefore it was imperative to purposely look for schools that had classes up to class eight. This was after getting information from the office of the District Education office that the concept of having private schools in Lugare was still new. Hence, three private schools were selected.

After selecting schools from Lugare district, the second stage involved selecting pupils to be interviewed. The researcher estimated that every class would have about fifty pupils especially now that free primary education has led to larger classes (UNESCO 2005: 6). Therefore the researcher settled for five percent of the total number of the pupils in the class which came to five pupils per class. This means that in every school, forty pupils were selected. The figure of forty pupils from every school was chosen because of reasons related to the cost of data collection and its management.

The selection of pupils was done using stratification technique. Within each school, the pupils were stratified according to classes and gender from class 1-8. This was done using the class register. The class register was used so that all categories of readers: enthusiastic, average and even reluctant readers may be represented. Such pupils were picked from the top list, middle and bottom. A total number of 545 pupils were interviewed in Lugare district, of this number, 291 were girls and 254 were boys.

#### **4.5.2 Study sample from Nairobi**

Nairobi has a total number of 210 public primary schools managed by the Nairobi city council and are attended by pupils of low and medium income families, representing almost every Kenyan language or ethnic background. On the other hand there are 115 private primary schools in Nairobi. In order to get a good representation of the various types of schools from high and low income areas in Nairobi, the first stage employed the purposive sampling method.

Schools in Nairobi are stratified according to divisions. Therefore, from the list of schools provided by the Nairobi city council education department, schools from each of the

following administrative divisions were sampled: Dagoretti, Embakasi, Kasarani, Kamukunji, Langata, Makadara, Starehe and Westlands. Purposive sampling strategy was used to select the widest range of school environments. In total twenty public primary schools and thirteen private schools were selected using the 10% of the population as was done in Lugare district thus in total 33 schools were selected for the study in Nairobi. Again for private schools in Nairobi, the criterion for selecting a school was that it had to have classes up to class eight. The selection of pupils used the same method as in schools in Lugare district. In total, 1315 pupils from Nairobi participated in the research, of this number, 722 were girls and 593 were boys.

In general the age of the pupils who participated in the interview ranged from 5 to 18 years. The official primary school going age in Kenya is between ages 6 to 14 years. Various reasons can explain the presence of over-age pupils in both districts. This could be due to late enrolment where there was a delay in starting school. Another reason could be related to the enrolment of children who were once street children (street children are those children who spend their time on the street begging and the street is also home for most of them) or those who dropped out of school to work and have rejoined school. It could also be due to pupils repeating classes because of poor performance. This therefore means that some children are in classes that are not appropriate to their age. Those who are above fourteen are supposed to be either in early secondary schools, or starting college. Having children who are above the right age in a class has an impact on selecting stories for them because they have had different life experiences compared to the normal age pupils. For instance, children who have lived on the streets in Nairobi pose greater challenges when placed in the same class with “normal” children. This is due to the fact that most of these pupils will come to class with patchy educational background, with some having short attention span due to the effects of sniffing glue and serious linguistic difficulties as most of them speak *Sheng* as their mother tongue (Githiora 2002: 170).

All the 48 head teachers in the selected primary schools were involved in the interview. The head teachers provided much of the administrative information needed in the study. The targeted teachers were those who teach Kiswahili in the respective schools and a minimum of three teachers in every school was the target figure to be interviewed in schools with more than three Kiswahili teachers. In schools where less than three teachers

of Kiswahili were present, only the teachers present were interviewed. A total number of 111 Kiswahili teachers were interviewed against the targeted figure of 144.

Parents with children from the selected primary schools were interviewed. Because of the diversity in the background of the parents especially on their residences, the researcher opted for three parents per school. However in Lugare six more parents opted to participate in the research giving a total of 51 parents from Lugare and 82 from Nairobi. Children were requested to give the geographical maps of their homes so that the researcher could reach the parents at home later in the day. The interview sessions for parents was done at home. Since the parents' questionnaire had a Kiswahili translation, the parents were encouraged to respond in the language they felt comfortable. In total, 133 parents were interviewed against the targeted sample of 144 parents.

The targeted sample of respondents was 1920 pupils, 48 head teachers, 144 teachers and 144 parents. The researcher managed to interview 1860 pupils, 48 head teachers, 111 teachers, and 133 parents. This gave a success rate of 97%, 100%, 77%, and 92% respectively. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (1999: 83) this response is adequate for analysis and reporting descriptive research. The overall distribution of participants in the study is presented in table 1 below.

**Table 4.1: Overall distributions of participants in the study**

| Participants       | Nairobi | %  | Lugare | %  | Total | %   |
|--------------------|---------|----|--------|----|-------|-----|
| Head teachers      | 33      | 69 | 15     | 31 | 48    | 100 |
| Kiswahili teachers | 86      | 77 | 25     | 23 | 111   | 100 |
| Pupils             | 1315    | 71 | 545    | 29 | 1860  | 100 |
| Parents            | 82      | 62 | 51     | 38 | 133   | 100 |

## 4.6 Research instruments

The study employed three research instruments in data collection. These were:

- a) Questionnaires
- b) Field observation
- c) Interviews

#### **4.6.1 Questionnaires**

Four sets of questionnaires were used in this study and they included: head teachers' questionnaire, Kiswahili teachers' questionnaire, pupils' questionnaire and parents' questionnaire (see appendix 1-4). The questionnaires were constructed to mirror many of the questions that have been asked in various studies of children's and young peoples' reading habits, practices and attitudes (Clark & Foster 2005). However the questionnaires for this study were modified to suit the situation in Kenya. The questionnaires were constituted to examine the pupils reading habits, the frequency of reading for pleasure and the pupils' attitudes towards reading, availability of reading materials, accessibility of the reading materials, the role played by teachers and parents in encouraging reading habits among school going children.

According to Fontana & Frey (1994: 363), questionnaires can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Structured interviewing refers to a situation in which an interviewer asks each respondent a series of pre - established questions with limited set of response categories. This is used for collecting factual information (Nichols 1991: 49, Greig & Taylor 1999: 126). Generally, there is little room for variation in response to this kind of questions. The responses are also recorded by the interviewer according to a coding scheme that has already been established by the main researcher. The interviewer controls the place of the interview by following the questionnaire in a standardized and straightforward manner (Fontana & Frey 1994: 363). The respondents receive the same set of questions, asked in the same order or sequence.

The predetermined nature of structured interviewing is aimed at minimizing errors. However, Fontana & Frey (1994: 363), observe that structured interviewers are aware that interviews take place in a social interaction context, and are therefore influenced by that context. Secondly, there is the problem of the respondents answering in accordance with what they think the researcher wants to hear. In this study, the structured items were used where the researcher needed exhaustive and direct responses. The unstructured questions were used where flexible responses were required. It was hoped the respondents could reveal their opinion and attitudes. This type of instrument is more open-ended and is suitable for work on attitudes or opinions (Nichols 1991: 13) as was set out in this study. Thus the questionnaires were both direct and indirect. The direct questions involved asking



a general question which was then followed by asking specific questions relating to the general question.

The pupil's questionnaire was first tested to twenty pupils from both lower and upper classes in order to ascertain its validity and reliability. The essence was to determine its suitability and the level of understanding of the language and also the time it would take to complete the questionnaire. Amendments were made on the section that proved either hard to understand or where the answers given were too general. For example, the section on library use had to be put into two sections for better clarification than it was in the original questionnaire.

In addition to inquiring about the pupils' type of school, age, gender and class, information on the socio-economic background of the family was also sought. The information was gathered by asking the children about the occupation and the level of education of their parents or guardians. However, this method proved problematic especially with pupils in the lower classes. Some of them were unable to give the level of education and the occupation of their parents. All questionnaires were divided into two sections. Section one was on the background information of the respondents, while section two focused on the literary practices of the respondents and in particular pupils who are the main target of the research.

#### **4.6.2 Field observation**

In addition to the structured and unstructured questions that were used, this study also employed observation method and in particular the non-participant observation method. In this type of method the researcher only watches as he or she codes behaviours (Greg & Taylor 1999: 85). Observation method taps more information and it may prove more valuable than information from a whole series of structured interview, which may only show the surface of the situation (Nichols 1991: 12). The overall objective of the observation was to find out the state of school libraries and book stores and whether they offer any incentives to reading. The researcher examined the resources available in the school library, how the children used those resources and the role of school librarians. Photographs of the various school libraries and bookstores were taken to show their organization (see appendix 5). The observation technique was also carried out at one of the

book fair activities that took place in Nairobi in 2007. This involved pupils from various primary schools who had been invited to the book fair by the Kenya Publishers Association (see appendix 6). The observations were recorded in the researcher's field note book and later included in the discussion of the findings.

#### **4.6.3 Interviews**

The interviews were carried out mainly between the researcher and head teacher, the Kiswahili teachers and the school librarian or teacher in charge of the library. The researcher tried to keep track of the discussions with the head teachers on some particular school policies such as lending of storybooks to pupils and the language use policy. The Kiswahili teacher interviews focused on literary activities that take place in class. Finally, the librarian or teacher interview focused on how he / she operates the library and the kind of reading materials found in the library.

### **4.7 Data collection procedure**

The field work for this study lasted six months from September, 2007 to February, 2008. In Kenya, there are three school terms in a year; first term that begins in January to March, second term begins in May to July and third term begins in September to November. Third term is when pupils sit their examination to end the academic year before they go to next class. A school term lasts for about three months. This is followed by about three weeks break. Therefore, the field work of this study coincided with the third and first terms of the school year.

In preparation for the administration of research tools, the researcher had to first seek permission from the government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Education and the Nairobi City Education Office, for the schools in Nairobi. In Lugare the researcher obtained an official clearance form from the District Education Office in Lumakanda division in addition to the one from the Ministry of Education (See Appendix 7 for samples of research permits).

Once the relevant documents were obtained, the next step was to recruit research assistants. The four research assistants recruited, underwent research method training for one day. The training involved reading all the questionnaires and understanding them in order for the

objective of the study to be achieved and reliable information to be maintained. Therefore the researcher together with the research assistants studied the questionnaires in detail in order to familiarise themselves with the type of questions asked. The next step involved visiting the selected schools first in Lugare and later in Nairobi, in order to make appointments with the head teachers and the Kiswahili teachers, at the same time select pupils for the interviews.

Because of the differences in the ages of the pupils and the tight programme of the schools, the research assistants had to take two days in a school. This was because the pupils were put in two groups of lower primary and upper primary. The lower primary pupils needed more assistance and therefore more time allocation. In some schools the interviews were either held just after their lunch time meal for the lower classes or after classes for the upper primary pupils.

The researcher first explained the exercise to the pupils in simple Kiswahili and English language. The two languages were used because one, English language had been used in the questionnaire and it is also the official classroom language of Kenyan schools especially in upper classes. Kiswahili was used to expound on the information given in English for those who did not understand and for the fact that the study was interested in getting information on the state of children's literature in Kiswahili.

Greg & Taylor (1999: 131) observe that there are some similarities and differences between interviewing a child and an adult. However they point out that in both situations, the researcher must show a sense of rapport with the participants and assure them of his / her confidentiality. Establishing a rapport means that participants will be more willing to share everything with the researcher (Janesick 1994: 211). On the other hand, children are different from adults. This makes them special as interviewees and requires special treatment. One therefore needs to take into account their competences and motivations. For instance, familiar settings such as home or schools are valuable in assisting motivation and reducing anxiety.

The researcher explained to all respondents the importance of being honest in their answers to the questionnaires so that their real views could be noted and understood. Care was taken, too, to ensure all the respondents that their responses were confidential, not to be seen or discussed with any other person. For the pupils, it was explained that the responses

would not contribute in any way to their term or examination marks. They were informed that only the initials of their names would be used on the questionnaire.

It was difficult to assess what measure of confidence the respondents may have had in this precaution but it seemed at the time that the initial system did appeal to all. It should be recognized, however, that surveys and questionnaires are a rare phenomena in Kenya and especially in rural areas. Most people including children are not only unfamiliar with them but many must share the common distrust of such an exercise.

In this study the respondents were told in a relaxed manner that the researcher and the research assistants would help them if they did not understand the questions. Help was offered with the format of the questions; firstly, the researcher demonstrated how to answer the questions that had alternative answers. Secondly, the respondents were encouraged to ask for a repetition of the instructions to them privately if they felt they needed it.

Each parent or guardian, who was selected, was interviewed at home while the head teachers and Kiswahili teachers were interviewed in their respective schools. Meeting with parents was made possible through the assistance of the teachers who told the pupils to inform their parents about the research that was going on in the school. However it was not easy to get all the parents at home even with appointments. This was due to the fact that most of them work up to the late hours of the day.

The observation method was carried out after administering the questionnaires to all the subjects. This was done in order for the researcher to have adequate time with the school librarian or the teacher in charge of the school library. The aim of this method was for the researcher to observe closely the arrangement and management of the library in the school.

#### **4.8 Data analysis and presentation**

After collection of data, the first step was for the researcher to correct and edit the raw notes. Any response that was in Kiswahili was translated to English. Other than using structured questions, this study also included unstructured questions and therefore collected different kinds of information. For the structured questions, the analysis was done using simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The next stage involved categorization of responses in the unstructured questions and the observation list on the

basis of content. This was in line with Barbbie's (1997: 362) view that "as a researcher in search of a narrative thread, you will be working to organize, categorize, and thematize and textualize." This study used the guidelines provided by Barbbie, where coding and analyzing of data was based on common themes in every category in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

The cognitive development theory, the social learning theory and transactional reader response theory used in this study enabled the researcher to fathom the province of a child's capacity in terms of his/her intellect process. These childhood potentialities were related to the way children choose books, how they read and respond to them. The researcher sought to know what children think of and feel about reading books and the selection they make in their reading. The researcher also sought to know the role played by parents and Kiswahili teachers in enhancing reading habits in children and what they think about the way their children read.

## **4.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the methods used for data collection in the study have been provided. The areas of study, sources of data, categories of primary schools in Kenya, the target population and the study sample, the research instruments, data collection process and data analysis have been described in detail. The discussions of the findings of the field research are presented in chapter five of this study.

## **5 Data analysis and discussion of results**

This study was undertaken in order to investigate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by examining the reading habits of pupils both at school and at home. Reading habits were measured in terms of the amount of reading materials available to pupils both at school and at home, the accessibility of the reading materials, the pupils' attitudes to reading, the frequency of reading for pleasure and any other activities that pupils engage in that contribute to enhancing and maintaining of reading habits. The study also targeted other stakeholders in children's literature by examining their contribution towards enhancing positive reading habits in children. These included: head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and parents. This study was based on 210 public and 115 private schools in Nairobi and 112 public and 25 private schools in Lugare district, in Western Province.

The researcher opted for 10% of the accessible population as the sample for the study. Thus, 48 schools participated in the study with 33 from Nairobi and 15 from Lugare district. The targeted sample respondents were 48 head teachers, 144 Kiswahili teachers, 1920 pupils and 144 parents respectively. The research managed to interview 48 head teachers, 111 Kiswahili teachers, 1860 pupils and 133 parents. This gave a success rate of 100%, 77%, 97% and 93% respectively.

In this chapter, the main results obtained in this study will be analyzed and discussed. The data in the study was analyzed using statistical program for social sciences. The information collected during the observation period is also included in the discussion of the findings. The results, which are descriptive in nature, are presented in tables and percentages. These results are presented in four main sections. The first two sections deal with the data obtained from the head teachers as the managers of schools and the Kiswahili teachers, as the people who impart knowledge to the pupils at school. These two come first because they provide the real picture of the situation of the availability of Kiswahili storybooks in schools and their role in enhancing reading habits in school. The third section deals with the pupils who are the focus of the study. In this section, focus shall be on the reading habits of these pupils. The last section will discuss the role played by parents in encouraging children to read at home.

## **5.1 Findings from the head teachers' responses to questionnaire items**

This section focuses on the contribution of head teachers in enhancing reading habits among primary school pupils in Kiswahili language in Kenya. In trying to identify their contribution, the study looked at the knowledge of head teachers in children's literature as an important factor in the study, language policy in schools, availability of storybooks in Kiswahili, challenges faced in acquisition of storybooks, availability of a school library and school librarian and book borrowing policy, availability of newspapers and magazines in schools, availability of radios and radio cassettes in school, views of head teachers regarding integration of children's literature and Kiswahili language and the impact of *Sheng* on Kiswahili language in schools.

Head teachers are appointees of the Kenya Teachers' Service Commission and they represent the higher authority in the hierarchy of education management in all public schools in Kenya. Government education policies as directed by the Ministry of Education are implemented at school level under the guidance and supervision of the head teacher (Olembo 1992: 154). Head teachers are therefore involved in the translation of educational policies and objectives into programmes within the school.

The head teacher is considered as the instructional leader of the school programme. In the school, the head teacher is expected to possess a superior knowledge about the curriculum and instruction and to provide expert leadership in all areas of the school (Nyamoita et al 2004: 49). It is because of their role in the management of the school that this study sought to find out about their responsibility in enhancing reading habits in pupils while at school.

The head teacher questionnaire had a total number of thirty six questions in which both open and closed questions were included. The questionnaire had two major sections with section one having sixteen questions and section two with twenty questions. Section one sought to find out about the head teachers' demographic information while section two focused on the literary practices in schools.

### **5.1.1 Section A: Head teachers' demographic information**

In this section, the demographic information of the head teachers is provided.

#### 5.1.1.1 The study population of the head teachers

A total number of forty eight head teachers were interviewed using both structured and unstructured questionnaire in order to provide information on the general situation of the schools. Thirty three head teachers were selected from primary schools in Nairobi, while fifteen head teachers were selected from schools in Lugare district. The table below shows the number of head teachers who participated in the study according to the districts.

Table 5.1: Head teachers' participation according to district

| District | Number of head teachers | %   |
|----------|-------------------------|-----|
| Nairobi  | 33                      | 69  |
| Lugare   | 15                      | 31  |
| Total    | 48                      | 100 |

#### 5.1.1.2 Type of primary school

In Kenya, there are two categories of schools that are formally recognized by the government; public and private schools. The two types of schools are supposed to comply with the conditions set up by the Ministry of Education in terms of teacher qualifications, norms and standards, length of school day, healthy standards, inspection and physical structure standards (Nyamoita et al 2004: 14). Majority of the primary schools in Kenya are public schools although the private schools are also increasing in number. Table 5.2 below shows the number of head teachers who participated in the study according to the two types of primary schools in Kenya.

Table 5.2 Head teachers' participation according to type of school

| Type of school | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Public         | 21      | 64  | 12     | 80  |
| Private        | 12      | 36  | 3      | 20  |
| Total          | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

The information on the type of school provided by the head teachers from Nairobi shows that 64% were from public primary schools while 36% were from private primary schools. From Lugare district, 80% of the head teachers were from the public primary schools, while 20% were from private primary schools.



The head teachers' characteristics were measured in terms of age, professional qualification, years of experience and training in children's literature at the teacher training college. The results of the analysis are presented in the following sections.

#### **5.1.1.3 Age of head teachers**

Table 5.3 below shows the age of the head teachers sampled from Nairobi and Lugare respectively.

Table 5.3 Head teachers' age

| Age   | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 25-30 | 1       | 3   | 0      | 0   |
| 31-35 | 2       | 6   | 0      | 0   |
| 36-40 | 8       | 24  | 0      | 0   |
| 41-45 | 8       | 24  | 1      | 7   |
| 46+   | 14      | 42  | 14     | 93  |
| Total | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

The age of the head teachers sampled from the two districts were in the age range of twenty-five to forty six and above. In Nairobi, only 3% of the head teachers were between ages 25-30 years, 6% were between 31-35 years. Those between ages 36-40 years were 24%. A similar number of 24% were between ages 41-45 years. Majority of the head teachers comprising of 42% were 46 years and above. There is some variation in the age of head teachers from Lugare whereby one head teacher was between the ages of 41-45 years, while the rest 93% were above 46 years. Lugare district seems to have head teachers who are old in age and therefore nearing their retirement age of fifty-five years.

#### **5.1.1.4 Head teachers' professional qualification**

According to Bogonko (1992: 179) a teacher's academic and professional qualifications are very important predictors of the quality of teaching because the essence of effective teaching lies in the ability of the teacher to set up desired educational outcomes. Table 5.4 presents information on the professional qualification of the head teachers from Nairobi and Lugare respectively.

Table 5.4 Head teachers' professional qualification

| Qualification           | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Graduate teacher        | 4       | 12  | 0      | 0   |
| S1/Diploma teacher      | 15      | 46  | 1      | 7   |
| Trained primary teacher | 12      | 36  | 14     | 93  |
| Pursuing first degree   | 2       | 6   | 0      | 0   |
| Total                   | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

The above table shows that most of the head teachers are trained primary school teachers. 12% of the head teachers from Nairobi are graduate teachers. The majority of the head teachers from Nairobi have diploma certificate in education and constitute 46% while Lugare has only 7% with a diploma certificate. The rest of the head teachers from Nairobi and Lugare are trained primary school teachers constituting 36% and 93% respectively. Overall the study shows that virtually all head teachers are trained as per the requirements of the Ministry of Education. However, most head teachers in Nairobi have a diploma certificate in education. Primary school teachers in Kenya are normally required to possess a certificate in education from a primary teacher training college. There are several levels of primary teacher certification (Ogula 1994: 18-20). These include:

- P3 teachers: refers to primary teacher grade 3 who have obtained a certificate in primary education. The P3 certificate is issued by the Ministry of Education to teachers who have taken a course of professional training.

- P2 teacher: refers to primary teacher grade 2 who have Kenya junior secondary certificate or obtained a division 4 in Kenya certificate of education. The teacher must have also taken a course of professional training.

- P1 teacher: refers to those teachers with a primary teacher Grade 1 and who obtained a Kenya Certificate of Education, division 3 or an equivalent qualification. The teacher must also have pursued a course of professional training.

- Diploma Certificate in Education: These are teachers who have a diploma in education and basically are supposed to teach in secondary schools. While in college, these teachers select

their preferred subjects which they will teach in schools as opposed to the primary teacher trainees who have to be taught all subjects that are taught in primary school.

-Untrained Teacher: This refers to a teacher without professional training. The bottom line is that even those who have a degree or are pursuing a degree must have passed through the primary teacher training.

There are twenty-one public and eight private primary teacher training colleges in Kenya (Ministry of Education 2004: 5).

This study reveals that all the head teachers who participated are qualified enough to interpret the curriculum and offer professional guidelines as heads of schools.

#### **5.1.1.5 Head teachers' teaching experience**

The teaching experiences of the head teachers are presented in table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5 Head teachers' teaching experiences

| Years of teaching | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 5-10 years        | 1       | 3   | 3      | 20  |
| 10-15 years       | 6       | 18  | 4      | 27  |
| 15+ years         | 26      | 79  | 8      | 53  |
| Total             | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

The results reveal that only 3% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare had taught for between 5-10 years. 18% from Nairobi and 27% from Lugare had taught for between 10-15 years and 79% from Nairobi and 53% from Lugare had taught for more than fifteen years. This shows that the majority of the head teachers had long experience in teaching.

#### **5.1.1.6 Training in children's literature course in teacher training college**

The Head teachers were asked to indicate whether they were taught children's literature during their teacher training course in college. Table 5.6 below shows the results.

Table 5.6 Training in children's literature in teacher training college

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 12      | 36  | 3      | 20  |
| No        | 21      | 64  | 12     | 80  |
| Total     | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

Table 5.6 shows that only 36% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare reported that they had received training in children's literature in teacher training college while the majority, 64% from Nairobi and 80% from Lugare reported that they had not received any training in children's literature in the teacher training college. The number of head teachers who said that they were not taught children's literature is a serious indictment of primary teacher education institutions in Kenya.

The figures seem to show that the head teachers are not competent enough to use or guide their teachers in school on how to integrate children's literature in the Kiswahili class room since they were not taught in college. As stated before, the head teachers are considered as instructional leaders of the school programs. One is therefore expected to possess a superior knowledge about curriculum and instruction and to provide expert leadership in all areas of the school program. Teachers' training programs should address both theory and practice in children's literature so that the teacher trainees can acquire the knowledge and skills in children's literature and when they come out of college they are confident to deal with children's literature issues. However it should be noted that teacher trainees in Kenya are taught how to analyze literary texts, however, this does not focus on children's literature.

According to a study carried out by Alazzi (2006), pre-service teachers who were read aloud to in methods course were found to use children's literature more often when working with children, they were more likely to create games and utilize children's literature and were found to have more personal enjoyment to literature. Therefore, teacher trainees need to be given the opportunity to experience children's literature so that they can translate that experience into a variety of opportunities with literature for their future pupils.

### 5.1.1.7 Language of instruction in primary school

A medium of instruction is a language used for the purpose of imparting knowledge in an educational system (Kihore 2000: 39). The language policy in education in Kenya states that in lower primary (from class 1-3), the language of the immediate community be used as medium of instruction in rural areas, while English be used in upper primary. In urban and peri-urban areas, English or Kiswahili should be used in lower primary (Republic of Kenya 1964; Mbaabu 1996: 144). Since 1985, Kiswahili has been a compulsory and an examinable language at the end of primary education (Mbaabu 1996: 152). The language of the school will most likely determine the choice of storybooks that are read. The head teachers were asked to state which languages are used as medium of instruction in the lower primary and upper primary classes in their schools. Tables 5.7 and 5.8 show the responses for languages used in lower and upper primary school respectively.

Table 5.7 Language(s) of instruction in lower classes 1-3

| Language(s)             | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| English                 | 17      | 52  | 4      | 27  |
| Kiswahili/English       | 12      | 36  | 9      | 60  |
| Kiswahili               | 3       | 9   | 2      | 13  |
| Kiswahili/mother tongue | 1       | 3   | 0      | 0   |
| Total                   | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

Table 5.7 reveals that English is the preferred language of instruction in lower classes in Nairobi with 52% of the head teachers recommending its use. This is followed by 36% of the head teachers recommending the use of both English and Kiswahili. 9% preferred to use Kiswahili as the language of instruction. Only one head teacher from Nairobi 3% indicated that the school uses both Kiswahili and mother tongue in lower primary classes. The results from Nairobi indicate that teachers assume that pupils come to class with some knowledge of English and Kiswahili from nursery or pre-school thus the use of English and Kiswahili in lower primary classes. This means that in such schools, children are exposed to English and Kiswahili in and outside class unlike students from other areas. It should be noted that in Nairobi, children come from families that speak different mother tongues.

This is because a large number of government servants are posted to the city from the outlying regions of the country and thus the need to use a neutral language in most situations. The use of mother tongue in Nairobi is found in the periphery where for instance children who speak Kikuyu are the majority since Kikuyu language has the majority speakers in this area.

In Lugare 27% head teachers indicated that they use English only as the language of instruction. Kiswahili and English are used as languages of instruction as reported by 60% of the head teachers. Only 13% indicated that they use Kiswahili only in lower primary school classes. None of the head teachers reported using any mother tongue in class. In the case of Lugare it is not easy to determine which dialect to use because there are varieties of dialects spoken in the district (see 4: 1 in this study).

The study reveals that a majority of head teachers have adopted a bilingual kind of policy where instead of the mother tongue being used in classes as per the government's stipulated policy in education, Kiswahili and English or Kiswahili and mother tongue are used as languages of instruction. This method of using two languages in class by the teacher is sometimes seen as a pedagogical success (Bunyi 1996: 70), since it is used by the teacher to bridge the gap between school knowledge and the experiential knowledge of the pupils. In Lugare as is the case with Nairobi, teachers assume that pupils have some knowledge of Kiswahili.

What is obvious from this data is that the two official languages are used in lower primary school as languages of instruction as opposed to mother tongue. This means that the head teachers do not encourage the use of mother tongues in school. Having the policy is one thing while policy implementation is another. The rationale for teaching mother tongue and through them for the first three years of primary school in Kenya is that it allows for home-school continuity as far as language is concerned (Bunyi 1996: 72). However one major problem in using mother tongue as language of instruction is the access to the learning materials. Publishers have not been able to publish in all the forty two languages spoken in Kenya (Ministry of Education 2007: 58,106). Section 1.5.4 of this study has looked at the various reasons as to why mother tongue languages are not used in lower classes in most of the Kenyan primary schools. In 1953 UNESCO observed that 'teachers by the attitude they display towards the use and value of African languages in education, can exert an influence

on the attitude of the people (UNESCO 1953: 12). This observation seems to still hold true in many primary schools, years after the UNESCO observation. The results of the language of instruction used in upper classes are presented in table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8 Language(s) of instruction in upper classes 4-8

| Language              | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| English               | 24      | 73  | 10     | 67  |
| Kiswahili and English | 9       | 27  | 5      | 33  |
| Total                 | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

In the upper classes in Nairobi and Lugare as table 5.8 indicates, 73% and 67% of the head teachers said that they use English as the medium of instruction in their schools. This was followed by 27% and 33% who use both Kiswahili and English as medium of instruction in upper classes. In upper classes, there is little mixture as compared to the lower classes. This means that in upper classes the pupils have had some adequate exposure to English. But in case of those who still use Kiswahili and English, it means the pupils are not yet conversant with the English language.

According to Bunyi (2006) various reasons can be attributed to this. For example, in Kenya there is a clear distinction between schools in rural areas and urban areas. And within the urban areas, there is a distinction between slum areas and those in more middle class settings. This distinction is reflected in the language of orientation of a school in terms of language of instruction; where schools that are under privileged will mainly use Kiswahili as language of instruction with some mixture of English while English is used in the privileged schools.

Knowing the language of instruction used in school is important because of the interrelationship between language and literature. It will reveal the preferences of choices made in the selection of storybooks. It is argued that a justification for the teaching of literature is its value in promoting language development (Carter & Long 1992: 2). The four skills that are normally emphasized in language learning can be developed through the teaching and learning of literature.

The implication of what has been discussed above to children's literature in Kiswahili is that all primary school pupils are exposed to Kiswahili and therefore can read storybooks

written in Kiswahili for as long as the language used in those stories matches the level of language for each pupil.

Having examined the language of instruction in primary schools, the following section focuses on literary practices in school and the role of head teachers in creating an environment that enhances reading habits among pupils in schools.

### **5.1.2 Section B: Literary practices in schools**

In this section, the study presents the responses of the head teachers in relation to literary practices in school. The discussion in this section will focus on the following sub topics; book selection process, frequency of Kiswahili storybook buying, approximate number of Kiswahili storybooks in school, challenges faced in acquisition of storybooks, availability of school library, availability of a school librarian, book borrowing policy in school, presence of other reading materials in schools, availability of a radio in school, head teachers' views regarding the integration of Kiswahili children's literature and Kiswahili language in the curriculum and the impact of *Sheng* on Kiswahili language.

#### **5.1.2.1 Approximate number of Kiswahili storybooks in schools**

Several factors influence readership in schools among them being the availability of storybooks. As a starting point the study examined the availability of storybooks in Kiswahili in the schools studied. The head teachers were asked to approximate the number of Kiswahili storybooks that they had bought since the introduction of the new Kiswahili syllabus of integrating children's literature and the Kiswahili language teaching and the inception of free primary education (FPE) in Kenya in 2003. Table 5.9 below shows the number of Kiswahili storybooks that have been bought by the head teachers.

Table 5.9 Approximate number of Kiswahili storybooks in schools

| Number of storybooks | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 50+                  | 29      | 88  | 9      | 60  |
| 20-30                | 2       | 6   | 3      | 20  |
| 1-10                 | 2       | 6   | 3      | 20  |
| Total                | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |



The results in table 5.9 reveal that since the introduction of the new Kiswahili syllabus and the inception of free primary education in 2003, 88% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 60% from Lugare have managed to buy over 50 storybooks in Kiswahili by the time of going for this research. 6% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare have bought between 20-30 storybooks in Kiswahili. Another 6% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare had bought between 1-10 storybooks in Kiswahili. The study reveals that the majority of the head teachers have tried to avail storybooks to the pupils in their schools. However, going by the figures given by the head teachers the set objective of having one storybook to every two people is yet to be attained. This also means that there are inadequate quantities of storybooks in Kiswahili especially in the wake of increasing enrolment of pupils. This could be a barrier to promoting a reading culture in schools.

More over, it is important to note that there is all the difference between availing storybooks in school and having the pupils read them, indeed for any meaningful reading for pleasure to take place, pupils need to be exposed to a variety of storybooks in school. A closer examination of the number of storybooks found in the *Approved List of Primary and Secondary Schools Textbooks and other Instructional Materials 2007* shows the different titles that pupils are exposed to. The table below shows the recommended number of storybooks written in Kiswahili according to class level together with the number of titles available per class.

Table 5.10 Available number of storybooks in Kiswahili according to class level and number of titles.

| Class level | Available titles |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1           | 7                |
| 2           | 11               |
| 1-2         | 5                |
| 2-3         | 14               |
| 3           | 21               |
| 1-3         | 9                |
| 3-4         | 5                |
| 4           | 22               |
| 4-5         | 13               |
| 4-6         | 2                |
| 4-7         | 4                |

| Class level | Available titles |
|-------------|------------------|
| 5           | 9                |
| 5-6         | 13               |
| 5-7         | 1                |
| 5-8         | 21               |
| 6           | 4                |
| 6-7         | 7                |
| 6-8         | 42               |
| 7           | 5                |
| 7-8         | 22               |
| 8           | 5                |
| Total       | 270              |

The findings reveal that in total, the number of Kiswahili storybooks that have been recommended to be read by pupils in primary schools in Kenya is 270. These titles have been categorized into levels according to what is considered appropriate in terms of content appeal, vocabulary and length of the storybook. Although the total number of storybooks is considerably small compared to the total number of storybooks found in the English language at more than 600 titles (Ministry of Education 2007) pupils can find materials in Kiswahili that they want to read depending on their interests.

#### 5.1.2.2 Storybook selection process

Chambers (1983: 47) posits that all reading begins with selection. This means that there must be plenty of books to select from or the books are easily available and can be borrowed or bought so that they may be read whenever and wherever the reader wishes. One cannot read anything until a decision is made on what to read. How the decision that is made is influenced by a great many factors including the availability of the storybooks. This study sought to find out how storybooks are selected for the pupils at school with the guidance of the head teacher. The head teachers gave varied answers. Table 5.11 shows the response from the Head teacher.

Table 5.11 Kiswahili storybook selection process

| Selection methods     | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Subject panel choice  | 15      | 46  | 9      | 60  |
| Choice per title      | 8       | 24  | 3      | 20  |
| A selection committee | 5       | 15  | 2      | 13  |
| Levels of learners    | 3       | 9   | 1      | 7   |
| Librarian             | 1       | 3   | 0      | 0   |
| Publishers' catalogue | 1       | 3   | 0      | 0   |
| Total                 | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

Before any discussion is made on the responses from the head teachers, it is important to first understand the general guidelines that have been put in place by the Ministry of Education regarding the selection of books, both text and supplementary reading materials that require public primary schools to follow.

In order to support the decision to provide free primary education, the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education, in consultation with its development partners agreed on a profile of the minimum requirement for instructional and supplementary materials that can be used in a school (Ministry of Education 2002). The aim was to make sure that books are selected to suit readers at certain ages and stages of education in order to make sure that they are suitable and meaningful for various stages. In this regard publishers who want their books to be included in the list of books to be used in schools are required to present copies of the books they intend to publish for vetting.

The general selection of textbooks and storybooks which began in 2003 with the introduction of free primary education and a new curriculum starts at the level of the Ministry (Rotich & Musakali 2006: 2). At this level, there is a committee known as 'Ministerial Textbook Vetting Committee' that is drawn from senior members of the Ministry of Education. The committee is given the responsibility of approving the appointment of subject panel members (Rotich & Musakali 2006: 3), who are given the responsibility of vetting books before they are sold into the market. The subject panels are drawn from:

- The Kenya Institute of Education.

- Members of the teaching staff from Kenyan universities.
- Members of staff from The Kenya Examination Council.
- Members of staff from the department of Quality Control of the Ministry of Education.
- Primary teacher training colleges.
- Teachers from both primary and secondary school levels.

All the books that are vetted and found to adhere to the regulations set by the ministry are then published in one book known as the *Approved List of Primary and Secondary Schools Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials* popularly known as ‘The Orange Book’. The *Approved List of Primary and Secondary Schools Textbooks and other Instructional Materials* provides a comprehensive list of textbooks and other instructional materials that have been approved by the Ministry of Education, for use in primary and secondary schools in Kenya (Pontefract & Were 2002: 22). Normally, the listing of the textbooks and storybooks in the “Orange Book” is done according to class levels. Also in the guide one finds the prices of the selected books. The guide covers all subjects and other areas of the curriculum (Ministry of Education 2007). Schools are expected to select all their books from this list and ensure that they examine the recommended books before they make any selection for their schools. Schools are also required to stick to the approved book policy. The list of books is relevant because teachers get to know what has been published.

The *Textbook Management Handbook* (Republic of Kenya 2007) provides step by step information on how schools should select their instructional materials including supplementary reading books. A summary of some the procedure is provided below:

- The school should set up a School Textbook Selection Committee (STS) and list the members of the committee in the Minute Book.
- Subject teachers should be involved in selecting the books.
- The Committee should study the present Ministry of Education’s, ‘Approved list or any additional circulars on textbooks and supplementary books’, to determine which books and other instruction materials to purchase. It should be noted that no books or other items outside the approved list issued by the government of Kenya

can be purchased using funds given to schools. However, the decision concerning how many books to buy is left to the school administration.

Going back to the responses, one can now understand why the head teachers mention the subject panel choice, with 46% from Nairobi and 60% from Lugare. This means that teachers are involved in selecting books according to the subjects that they teach. Selection of storybooks based on School Textbook Selection Committee constituted 15% of head teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare. 24% from Nairobi and 13% from Lugare indicated that they used the title of the storybook in choosing the books. 9% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 7% from Lugare indicated that the selection was done according to the levels of the learners. The remaining two head teachers indicated that they used either the librarian or selected books as per the publishers' catalogue.

From the information given above regarding selection of books, it is obvious that the head teachers never get the opportunity to read through the storybooks so that they can select books for the pupils. It means therefore that the selection done at this level is more general. What the head teachers want is to have their schools stocked with storybooks. Therefore the proper selection can be done by the respective teachers depending on the needs of their pupils.

However the most important point to consider in selecting storybooks for pupils is that by Green (1976: 7) who says, "If literary taste is to develop, if children's varying interests and reading needs are to be met, if reading skills are to be strengthened through supplementary reading, the books in the library must be carefully selected." Thus, care must be taken by those selecting storybooks so that the motivation of pupils to read is not killed by books that do not impress them. It is important to choose books that pupils of all ages can read independently and still have an interesting content and story appeal. Independent reading involves the kind of reading that pupils choose to do on their own and it ought to be encouraged.

#### **5.1.2.3 Frequency of buying storybooks for the schools**

Children need access to a wide range of reading materials to help them acquire and maintain fluent reading skills, broaden horizons and think independently and critically

(Tella & Akande 2007: 119). The head teachers were asked to report on how often they bought storybooks in school. The table below shows the results.

Table 5.12 Frequency of buying storybooks

| Number of times books are bought | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Once a year                      | 24      | 73  | 12     | 80  |
| Once per term                    | 9       | 27  | 3      | 20  |
| Total                            | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

The majority of the head teachers who comprise of 73% from Nairobi and 80% from Lugare reported that they buy storybooks once in a year. While 27% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare said they buy storybooks for their schools every term.

Buying of books for the school depends on the disbursement of funds from the government of Kenya. The government disburses money to the various schools' bank accounts every year usually at the beginning of the year and so it is up to the head teachers to decide how often they will buy the books in a year. The allocation of funds is based on the total number of pupils in a school (Ministry of Education 2003).

An interview with head teachers from private schools revealed that in private schools, parents have a book fund where parents contribute a certain amount of money on admission of their children in school. The money goes towards buying of textbooks and other supplementary reading materials. In addition, the schools recommend to parents the storybooks both in Kiswahili and English which they should buy for their children.

#### **5.1.2.4 Challenges faced in acquisition of Kiswahili storybooks**

The head teachers were asked to report any challenges faced during the acquisition of storybooks from the booksellers. Table 5.13 shows the findings.

Table 5.13 Challenges faced in acquisition of storybooks

| Responses   | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes         | 9       | 27  | 8      | 53  |
| No          | 18      | 55  | 4      | 27  |
| No response | 6       | 18  | 3      | 20  |
| Total       | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

As shown in table 5.13 above, 27% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 53% from Lugare reported that they faced problems when it comes to acquisition of the storybooks. 55% from Nairobi and 27% said they did not face any challenges in ordering storybooks. The rest of the head teachers, 18% from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare did not respond. These could probably be some of the head teachers from private schools who are not funded by the government and therefore do not have to go through the same procedure of ordering storybooks like those in public schools. What is notable is that the Ministry of Education with the support of donor partners have tried to put in place a unified system of provision of textbook and other reading materials such that some of the logistical problems that were experienced by most head teachers in the beginning of the programme have been addressed (Pontefract & Were 2002: 22).

Those who indicated that they faced challenges in ordering the storybooks were asked to indicate the problems faced. Some of the challenges included: none-availability of some of the storybooks that had been identified in the ‘Orange book’ from the nearest book shops and that the delivery of the books by booksellers to the schools takes long. Indeed in the rural areas like Lugare district, well stocked bookshops are rare. The well stocked bookshops are found many kilometres away from the primary schools. If certain storybooks are out of stock they have to be ordered from Nairobi where most publishers operate from. In addition, the transport system in most rural areas is poor.

#### **5.1.2.5 Availability of a school library**

Effective school libraries provide additional reading opportunities for pupils in turn this improves reading skills, comprehension, writing and clarity of expression which in turn supports pupils’ performance in all other curriculum subjects (Usanga & Usoro 2007: 2). In this study, the head teachers were asked to report on the availability of libraries in their

school. Table 5.14, provides the information on the availability of libraries in primary schools.

Table 5.14 Availability of a school library

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 26      | 79  | 2      | 13  |
| No        | 7       | 21  | 13     | 87  |
| Total     | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

The results in table 5.14 show that out of the 48 primary schools that participated in the study, 79% of schools from Nairobi and 13% from Lugare had school libraries, while 21% of primary schools from Nairobi and 87% from Lugare did not have a school library.

Personal observation in most schools revealed that in most schools, there were inadequate premises which were usually just converted classrooms with insufficient space, shelving and furniture. In such libraries, pupils were squeezed together and thus reading did not seem enjoyable. In most cases, the stocks in some libraries were generally old and irrelevant to current curricular and students' interest. In some schools, stores were referred to as libraries. In certain schools, mats were spread on the floor where pupils sat as they read. Storage facilities in some schools were lacking and therefore most books were damaged due to poor storage also caused by pest and fungal damage. In addition the researcher noted that storybooks that were kept in boxes were done so haphazardly making it difficult to retrieve them (See appendix 5 for pictures of some of the school libraries and book stores).

The lack of a library in most schools can be perceived as many schools not giving sufficient thought to promoting children's independent reading (Krolak 2005: 72). This is also a reflection on the government not giving priority to construction of libraries in primary schools despite the fact that it provides free textbooks and reading materials. Even in primary schools where the head teachers indicated that they had a library, when pressed to say where the pupils read from during the library hour most of them indicated that they read from the classes because, 'the library was not well equipped' an indication that the libraries were underused. In other cases schools had more textbooks than storybooks on their bookshelves. Hence confirming what Bakka (2000: 84) referred to as 'textbook



learning' that takes place in most primary schools in reference to the type of learning observed in many schools.

A library period is provided for in the primary school curriculum. The average is thirty five minutes per week for every class. In some schools, it was observed that there were no pupils in the libraries during the library period. This could mean that the teachers were using the library hour to teach other lessons.

According to Krolak (2005: 71), libraries are supposed to assist in finding, using and interpreting appropriate information that opens up opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy enhancement, informed citizenship, recreation, creative imagination, individual research, critical thinking and ultimately empowerment in an increasing complex world. In addition, the Education for All (EFA) framework on action for meeting basic learning needs (1994, 1990) argued that there is need to recognize libraries as invaluable information resource which must work in partnership with school and community workers. The school library should give individualized service, making sure that every user receives the information that meets his / her particular needs (Usanga & Usoro 2007).

In this study it was noted that schools have storybooks that have been bought through free primary education funding but most children have no access to the books. This therefore means that by not providing pupils with an adequate library in school, the pupils are missing out on developing reading habits and hence not enhancing their literacy levels. Usanga & Usoro (2007) point out that, those children who read only when in 'a reading class' are not being taught a love for reading. The library lesson should take place in the library for pupils in the upper class and class libraries should be provided for pupils in the early stages of school life.

#### **5.1.2.6 Availability of a school librarian or teacher librarian**

A librarian is that person responsible for directing the school library media programme (Huck 1979: 617). It is assumed that such a director would have had training as a school librarian, a media specialist and in many instances would have a teaching certificate. Specialized training provides background knowledge of children's books and all media for instruction, library media procedures, knowledge of children's development and behaviour,

understanding of various teaching methods and knowledge of school curriculum needs and organization (Huck 1979: 617).

Usanga & Usoro (2007) observe that in primary school context, ‘it is not enough to build and stock a school library. The information resources must be made accessible to children, who must be educated and encouraged to use the resources effectively for lifelong education’. This can be done by school librarians or teacher-librarian. Various studies (Krolak 2005, Usanga & Usoro 2007) have indicated that teacher-librarians can help to improve reading skills and improve attitudes towards reading. Head teachers were therefore asked whether schools had school librarians to manage the school libraries or the book stores. Table 5.15 shows the number of schools that have a librarian or teacher librarian.

Table 5.15 Availability of school librarian or teacher librarian

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 20      | 61  | 2      | 13  |
| No        | 13      | 39  | 13     | 87  |
| Total     | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

Table 5.15 reveals that 61% of the schools from Nairobi and 13% from Lugare had either a librarian or teacher librarian. 39%, head teachers from Nairobi and 87% from Lugare indicated that they neither had a librarian or a teacher-librarian.

Despite the fact that most schools in Nairobi have libraries where the storybooks can be stocked, they do not have librarians to manage the libraries. A closer observation revealed that most schools had selected one teacher and asked to take charge of the school library. These teacher-librarians are assisted by library prefects. Library prefects are pupils within the various grades in school who help in routine circulation of books among their fellow pupils. The prefects are supposed to rearrange books on the shelves or put them back in the book-boxes where they are taken to the book stores.

Sangkaeo states that, “in any effective school library programme the librarian should have definite responsibilities in certain areas of the curriculum and should have an active teaching role” (Sangkaeo 1999: 3). To Sangkaeo, the role must always be coordinated with what is taking place in the classroom. By having a wide knowledge of materials and

techniques for using them, the librarian can now make very strong partners in the planning and implementation of the educational enterprise.

For those primary schools with a librarian, the librarians should endeavour to make the school library attractive to the pupils. Sangkaeo recommends the usefulness of arranging some of the fiction so that it is grouped according to subject-matter rather than stacked alphabetically according to author's name. The storybooks can also be arranged according to broad headings such as animal stories, adventure stories, love stories, war stories, science and fiction.

#### **5.1.2.7 Storybook borrowing policy in primary school**

It is one thing to have storybooks in the school library or any other place that the storybooks are stored and another to have pupils read the storybooks whenever they want to. A crucial question is whether pupils are allowed to borrow storybooks from school so that they can read them whenever and wherever they want. Head teachers were asked to report on the borrowing policy of storybooks in school. Table 5.16 reports on borrowing policy of storybooks in primary schools.

Table 5.16 Storybook borrowing policy

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 23      | 70  | 8      | 53  |
| No        | 10      | 30  | 7      | 47  |
| Total     | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

Table 5.16 reveals that 70% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 53% from Lugare have a storybook borrowing policy. 30% of head teachers from Nairobi and 47% from Lugare indicated that they did not allow pupils to borrow storybooks from the school library or store.

Personal interviews with the head teachers and school librarians indicated that borrowing policy varies in schools. In some schools, pupils are allowed to borrow books as shown above. Other head teachers indicated that they only allow parents to borrow storybooks on behalf of their children during school holidays. This helps in making sure that the storybooks are taken care of since the parents will be responsible for any loss or damages

on the storybooks. However, most head teachers said that books in Kiswahili are too few and therefore pupils are not allowed to borrow them. Again due to the risk of damage and theft, most head teachers said they were often unwilling to lend out books. Instead, pupils were only allowed to read from the library for those who have libraries and in classes during library hour. Indeed, for a culture of reading to be cultivated, schools must play a leading role in making storybooks much more accessible to pupils. In a discussion on ‘The role of school library in literacy and lifelong learning’, Usanga & Uoro (2007) point out that for children and youth to develop skills for self-directed enquiry rather than the mere inculcation of subject matter, they need to have a well equipped library and a book borrowing policy. It is important for pupils to borrow books and become readers than to operate systems that will help stop loss of storybooks.

#### 5.1.2.8 Availability of newspapers or magazines in school

Newspapers are veritable tools for promoting literacy through reading, writing and dialogue among readers and critics, which are the hallmark of effective and efficient use of language (Babalola 2002: 403). Newspapers are generally published to disseminate diverse kinds of information that are of interest to a broad spectrum of the audience among who are school children, youth in the impressionable years, elites, educated and semi-educated (Babalola 2002: 407). Head teachers were asked to indicate if they provide their pupils with various newspapers and magazines in school. Table 5.17 reveals the findings.

Table 5.17 Availability of newspapers and magazines in schools

| Serial number | newspaper/<br>magazines | Nairobi |          | Lugare  |          |
|---------------|-------------------------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
|               |                         | Yes (%) | No (%)   | Yes (%) | No (%)   |
| 1             | Daily Nation            | 11 (33) | 22 (67)  | 0 (0)   | 15 (100) |
| 2             | Sunday Nation           | 3 (9)   | 30 (91)  | 1 (7)   | 14 (93)  |
| 3             | Taifa Jumapili          | 2 (6)   | 31 (94)  | 0 (0)   | 15 (100) |
| 4             | Taifa Leo               | 6 (18)  | 27 (82)  | 0 (0)   | 15 (100) |
| 5             | Standard                | 6 (18)  | 27 (82)  | 0 (0)   | 15 (100) |
| 6             | Sunday Standard         | 5 (15)  | 28 (85)  | 1 (6)   | 14 (94)  |
| 7             | Maneno                  | 3 (9)   | 30 (91)  | 1 (6)   | 14 (94)  |
| 8             | Sparkle                 | 0 (0)   | 34 (100) | 0 (0)   | 15 (100) |
| 9             | Sara                    | 2 (6)   | 31 (94)  | 0 (0)   | 15 (100) |
| 10            | Any other               | 6 (18)  | 27 (82)  | 0 (0)   | 15 (100) |

The results in table 5.17 show that from the different kinds of newspapers found in Kenya, only a small number of head teachers manage to provide their pupils with a few of them. The results also show that from the newspapers printed by the Nation Media Group which include the Daily Nation, the Sunday Nation, Taifa Leo and Taifa Jumapili only 33% of head teachers from Nairobi had the Daily Nation while the head teachers from Lugare indicated that they did not buy. 9% of the head teachers from Nairobi and only 7% from Lugare had bought the Sunday Nation. 18% head teachers from Nairobi buy the Taifa Leo and 6% buy the Taifa Jumapili, none of the head teachers from Lugare buys the papers for their schools. Taifa Leo and Taifa Jumapili are available in Kiswahili. Standard and Sunday Standard newspapers are bought by 18% and 15% of the head teachers from Nairobi respectively. In one of the schools, the researcher observed that the school had bound copies of the various newspapers.

Interestingly, Maneno, Sara and Sparkle are magazines meant for school children yet they are the least bought by the head teachers. Maneno is bought by 9% of the head teachers from Nairobi and only one head teacher from Lugare, while Sara is bought by only 6% of the head teachers from Nairobi only. Sparkle is not bought at all by any of the head teachers.

This implies that most of the head teachers are not aware of the availability of magazines for children which are found in the market or that the head teachers regard magazines as irrelevant to mainstream literature in that what they offer is not legitimate in school and therefore not to be encouraged as good reading practice. To the head teachers, these magazines do not contain any visible value either aesthetically or educational. This also means that the head teachers ignore the interest of those children who enjoy reading newspapers. (See 5.3.2.24 on responses of pupils on newspapers). On the other hand, in the case of Lugare, it is possible that the children magazines hardly reach this rural area.

However head teachers need to understand that such magazines can be appropriate in schools since they target the children. Newspaper articles especially stories for young people found in newspapers and children's magazines can be used in schools to develop reading skills among pupils. In addition, the newspapers can be used to create awareness of the emerging issues in society. Therefore, pupils should be exposed as much as possible to

reading of other relevant materials so that they are given the chance to encounter real language and not language of the text-books only.

Studies have reported benefits of including nonfiction texts in primary grade classrooms (Nell & Bennet-Armistead 2004: 2). Such texts when used in class can build background knowledge, increase vocabulary, build on children's interest and enriches use of text across the curriculum. Pupils whose parents cannot afford to buy these magazines can find them in schools if only the head teachers made them available. For instance, The Sunday Nation, Sunday Standard and Taifa Jumapili have set aside pages where children can find stories; puzzles, book reviews, and general information that target school going children.

#### **5.1.2.9 Availability of radios and radio cassettes in school**

According to Odera (2006), the scope and mode of using radio in schools in Kenya relies heavily on the head teachers. The part played by head teachers helps to determine the effectiveness, efficiency and shapes the manner in which radio broadcasts are used (Odera 2006: 3). Other than listening to content subjects, radio can be used to listen to stories for children thus enhancing the listening skills. It is with this in mind that the study sought to find out from the head teachers if their schools had radios. Table 5.18 shows the findings about the availability of radios in schools.

Table 5.18 Availability of a radio and radio cassette

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 21      | 64  | 7      | 47  |
| No        | 12      | 36  | 8      | 53  |
| Total     | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

Results in table 5.18 reveal that the majority of the head teachers from Nairobi comprising of 64% and slightly less than half of the head teachers from Lugare comprising of 47% had radios for their schools, while 36% of head teachers from Nairobi and 53% from Lugare indicated that their schools did not have a radio.

Radio broadcasting is intended to supplement school activities by providing an additional resource for teachers and pupils (Ministry of Education 2005: 14). Through radio

broadcasting, pupils can learn to listen to stories. Use of radio helps the teacher to make their lessons more interesting and lively.

Considering that Kenya has a long history of educational broadcasting dating back to pre-independence period (Ministry of Education 2005: 15), it is not clear why schools that indicate that they do not have a radio have not made any effort to have one. In 2003 when free education was re-introduced in Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Education (K.I.E.) entered into an agreement with World space to revive the broadcast to schools that had been terminated in 1980's. The schools have an eight hour broadcast timetable used by teachers to transmit educational programmes. The programmes are sent to various schools and are also listed in the Daily Nation newspaper every day. This again makes it necessary for the head teachers to have newspapers in schools so that they can organize their pupils on time for the radio programs. As pointed out by UNICEF (2006: 229) in regard to Education for All, 'radio has continuing potential for use in literary development'. In order to encourage children to read, the radio programme for schools should also include children reading out stories that should be aired once or twice in a week.

In addition, radio promotes pupils' learning, for instance, a study carried out by Odera (2006) in Kenya revealed that through listening to Kiswahili programmes on radio, pupils who were ashamed of expressing themselves in Kiswahili gained confidence after listening to the radio lessons in class. This is because the radio programmes involve children in the radio lessons. This helps the pupils listening to the programmes identify with the child presenter. However, a closer look at the radio programme's time-table shows that pupils in lower classes do not participate in the radio programmes. It would be prudent to include them by introducing them to sessions where they listen to stories. Reading aloud to children through radio inspires children to read and thus create a love for storybooks.

Some publishing firms in Kenya, for instance, Phoenix Publishers have produced Kiswahili Audio Books that can be used in schools for the lower classes, thus the need for radio and CD players in schools. Some of the storybooks that have been translated into audio include storybooks such as *Zawadi ya Rangi*, *Ujeuri wa Mbwa*, *Chura Mcheza Ngoma* and *Marafiki wa Pela*

#### **5.1.2.10 Head teachers' views regarding the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili**

The head teachers were asked about their views on integrating children's literature in Kiswahili and Kiswahili language. All head teachers were positive about children's literature being incorporated in the teaching of Kiswahili language. They listed various benefits of children's literature in Kiswahili which included: leading to language improvement, improving reading skills, widening knowledge through helping the pupils understand their environment, understanding other people's culture, hence promoting unity and integration in the community and lastly, motivating learners to read for leisure. Basing on Rosenblatt's (1995) efferent and aesthetic distinction, the findings reveal that head teachers tend to direct their pupils to adopt efferent stances towards reading storybooks

#### **5.1.2.11 Head teachers' attitudes towards *Sheng***

*Sheng*, as already discussed elsewhere in this study (1.5.5) is a mixed language that emerged from the complex multilingual situation of Nairobi city (Mbaabu 1996: 212). It is spoken mainly by urban pre-adolescents, adolescents, youth and young adults in Nairobi and other urban areas and now gaining roots in rural areas through the media and music. Since its emergency in Nairobi, there have been reactions to this variety from teachers and other members of the society. This study set out to find out the views of head teachers regarding the impact of *Sheng* on Kiswahili language. Table 5.19 reveals the head teachers' views on *Sheng*.

Table 5.19 Head teachers' attitudes towards *Sheng*

| Responses                              | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| <i>Sheng</i> interferes with Kiswahili | 24      | 73  | 8      | 54  |
| Should be banned                       | 9       | 27  | 3      | 20  |
| Media influence                        | 0       | 0   | 2      | 13  |
| Promotes indiscipline                  | 0       | 0   | 2      | 13  |
| Total                                  | 33      | 100 | 15     | 100 |

73% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 54% from Lugare felt that *Sheng* has impacted negatively on Kiswahili language. This rises from the fact that the grammatical structure of



*Sheng* is really that of mainstream Kiswahili (Githiora 2002: 175) and therefore pupils fail to mark boundaries between *Sheng* and standard Kiswahili. 27% of the head teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare felt that *Sheng* should be banned from being spoken because of the confusion it brings into the class and family.

As it is now, it is not easy to ban a language completely in a community. However the pupils need to be reminded that *Sheng* is an informal code and cannot be used in formal situations. The pupils should therefore concentrate in mustering the standard Kiswahili by learning different vocabulary that can be used in different contexts through reading of storybooks written in Kiswahili.

13% of the head teachers from Lugare felt that the media has contributed to the spread and use of *Sheng* among the pupils. By implication it means that it is not possible to ban *Sheng* in any way since it is spread by the media through radio, television and music. Another 13% of the head teachers from Lugare felt that *Sheng* prompts indiscipline in school in that pupils use it as a secret code and pass messages that keep the teachers in the dark.

## **5.2 Findings from Kiswahili teachers' responses to questionnaire items**

This section discusses the role of Kiswahili teachers in enhancing reading habits in primary schools in Kenya. This is done by focusing on the following aspects: training in children's literature course in teacher training college, membership in the storybook selection committee, criteria for selecting Kiswahili storybooks for pupils, number of Kiswahili storybooks in the school library, literary classroom practices, teaching use of library, Kiswahili storybooks used in class, role of children's literature in language improvement, children's literature in Kiswahili and the enhancement of other subjects, Kiswahili teachers' views towards integrating children's literature and Kiswahili language, teachers as readers, presence of reading or debating clubs in schools and parental support in pupils' reading activities.

Teachers, as already observed elsewhere in this study (see. 1.8), play an important role in the pupils' achievements in school. They are crucial as enablers in matters relating to educational development and curricula renewal (Obonyo 1994: 10). Being responsible for promoting learning in schools, teachers can contribute in translating curriculum ideas into practicalities. The teacher is therefore expected to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic and

inspiring (Ogula 1994: 8). He or she should have positive attitudes towards the subject he or she is teaching and towards her pupils. Studies have shown that an important factor in the formation of attitudes towards a subject is the attitude of the teacher (Ogula 1994: 8). Attitudes of teachers have been recognized to play a major role in the success or failure of projects in the educational programmes (Mariko 2005: 380). There is therefore a possibility that teachers' attitudes and behaviours about a subject such as children's literature may have an influence on the frequency of their mention of storybooks in class and in their involvement in activities regarding children's literature itself.

Some of the ways in which a teacher affects changes in pupils' attitudes include: enthusiasm for the subject, reinforcement, and commitment to help students learn and also through acting as a model. These traits in turn earn respect for the teacher which in turn contributes to the nurturing of positive attitudes towards the subject (Ogula 1994: 8).

In reading, a teacher is the central person in the process of literary motivation of the future readership (Mariko 2005: 380). Indeed, the value of children's literature to children's literacy development cannot be contested. Because children's literature is so valuable to children, it should also be valuable to the people responsible for educating them that is, their teachers. It is with this in mind that this study set out to establish the role of Kiswahili teachers in enhancing reading habits in pupils by determining: (a) their attitudes towards children's literature in Kiswahili, (b) the extent of their use of children's literature in class and (c) their perception of the curriculum policy of integrating children's literature in Kiswahili language.

The teacher questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section one which had a total number of 15 questions, sought to find out the teachers demographic information. The data on Kiswahili teachers' demographic information was based on the following variables: location of school, type of school, age of the teachers, Kiswahili teachers' qualification, and training in children's literature in teacher training college and teaching experience of the teachers and participation in in-service courses relating to acquiring skills in children's literature teaching.

Section two of the questionnaire was based on the literary practices in class. Literary practices involve various ways in which storybooks are used in class to inculcate and

enhance reading habits. The questionnaire elicited information on: (a) membership in the storybook selection committee, (b) criteria for selecting Kiswahili storybooks for pupils, (c) approximate number of Kiswahili storybooks in the school library, (d) class levels in which Kiswahili storybooks are used, (e) literary classroom practices in Kiswahili, (f) if Kiswahili teachers teach their pupils how to use a library, (g) children's literature in Kiswahili and language improvement (h) relating children's literature in Kiswahili to other subjects, (I) teacher's views towards integrating children's literature and Kiswahili language (j) Kiswahili teachers as literary role models (k) reading or debating clubs in schools and (l) teacher-parent support in enhancing reading habits.

### **5.2.1 Section A: Kiswahili teachers' demographic information**

This section presents the demographic information of the Kiswahili teachers who participated in the study.

#### **5.2.1.1 The study population**

A total number of one hundred and eleven (111) Kiswahili teachers were interviewed using both structured and unstructured questionnaire in order to provide information on the actual literary practices in class. This constituted 77% of the Kiswahili teachers sampled for the study. 77% Kiswahili teachers were selected from primary schools in Nairobi, while 23% were selected from schools in Lugare district. Table 5.20 below shows the number of Kiswahili teachers who participated in the study according to the selected districts.

Table 5.20 Kiswahili teachers' participation according to district

| District | No. of teachers | %   |
|----------|-----------------|-----|
| Nairobi  | 86              | 77  |
| Lugare   | 25              | 23  |
| Total    | 111             | 100 |

In table 5.20 above 77% teachers were from Nairobi district while 23% were from Lugare district in Western Province.

### 5.2.1.2 Type of school

Kiswahili teachers were also sampled according to whether the school they taught in was public or private. Table 5.21 indicates the type of school from which the Kiswahili teachers were selected from.

Table 5.21 Participation of Kiswahili teachers according to type of school

| Type of school | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Public         | 69      | 80  | 20     | 80  |
| Private        | 17      | 20  | 5      | 20  |
| Total          | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The information on the type of school provided by Kiswahili teachers, shows that 80% of the Kiswahili teachers were selected from public schools in Nairobi while 80% of the Kiswahili teachers from Lugare were selected from public schools. 20% of the Kiswahili teachers were selected from private schools in Nairobi and another 20% were selected from private schools in Lugare.

### 5.2.1.3 Age of Kiswahili teachers

The age of Kiswahili teachers who participated in this study ranged from 20 to 46 years and above. This information is contained in Table 5.22 below.

Table 5.22 Age of Kiswahili teachers

| Age   | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 20-25 | 6       | 7   | 5      | 20  |
| 26-30 | 12      | 14  | 1      | 4   |
| 31-35 | 24      | 28  | 3      | 12  |
| 36-40 | 21      | 24  | 4      | 16  |
| 41-45 | 16      | 19  | 3      | 12  |
| 46+   | 7       | 8   | 9      | 36  |
| Total | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

As seen from the table above, 7% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 20 % from Lugare were aged between 20-25 years. 14% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare were aged between 26-30 years. 28% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare were aged between 31-35 years. 24% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare were 36-40 years old. 19% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare were in the range of 41-45 years and finally 8% from Nairobi and 36% from Lugare were over 46 years. Basing on the age of the teachers, it can be deduced that teachers who are forty years and below and comprising of 73% from Nairobi and 52% from Lugare went through the system of education recommended by the Mackay commission of 1981 (See 1.5.3) whereby Kiswahili was made a compulsory and examinable language in primary and secondary schools and are therefore well grounded in Kiswahili language having studied it since their primary school level.

#### **5.2.1.4 Professional qualification of Kiswahili teachers**

A teacher's academic and professional preparedness are very important in the teaching process. This is because academic and professional training are believed to be factors that influence the implementation of any curriculum (Bogonko 1992: 185). At school, the teacher is a mediator of learning who guides children to achieve certification in education (Bogonko 1992: 179). It is the teacher's interpretation of the curriculum that really counts (Mawasi 2002: 66). This implies that a curriculum can be either a success or failure depending on the teachers. Well trained teachers can enliven what would otherwise be a dull and lifeless subject in the classroom. In this regard, the study sought to find out the Kiswahili teachers' academic qualification. Table 5.23 shows the results.

Table 5.23 Professional qualification of Kiswahili teachers

| Level of qualification         | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|--------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Trained primary school teacher | 60      | 70  | 20     | 80  |
| S1/Diploma teacher             | 11      | 13  | 4      | 16  |
| Graduate teacher               | 7       | 8   | 0      | 0   |
| Untrained                      | 8       | 9   | 1      | 4   |
| Total                          | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The above table indicates that in the sample of 111 Kiswahili teachers, those with primary teacher training emerge as the single majority with 70% from Nairobi and 80% from Lugare. In other words most of the Kiswahili teachers are trained. The diploma teachers emerge as second constituting 13% from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare. Nairobi has 8% Kiswahili teachers who are graduate teachers while there are no graduate teachers from Lugare. It should be noted that those who indicate that they are graduate teachers also have primary school teacher certificate. Lastly 9% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare are untrained primary school teachers.

In Kenya, the two year teacher training course for primary school teachers is divided in content between adding to what had been learnt in secondary school in the various subjects, and introducing the prospective teacher to methods of teaching. Kiswahili is among the compulsory subjects in the teacher training college. The teacher trainees are taught how to analyze literary texts among other skills being taught (Ministry of Education 1994: 54). The results therefore show that most Kiswahili teachers have sufficient knowledge in classroom management which is an important aspect of successful teaching.

#### **5.2.1.5 Training in children's literature course in teacher training college**

In a related question, the Kiswahili teachers were asked to say whether they were taught children's literature in teacher training college. Table 5.24 reveals the results.

Table 5.24 Training in children's literature course in teacher training college

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 31      | 36  | 9      | 36  |
| No        | 55      | 64  | 16     | 64  |
| Total     | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The results presented in table 5.24 above show that 36% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 36% from Lugare indicated that they were taught children's literature in college, while the majority 64% from Nairobi and 64% from Lugare indicated that they had not been taught how to handle a children's literature class.

These results indicate that the emphasis placed on children's literature in college is not uniform thus revealing the imbalance and neglect towards children's literature in the education system of primary school level in Kenya. It is necessary that teacher trainees should know and enjoy good books for children and learn the techniques of making children of various ages create interest in reading. It is therefore unfortunate that something that can play a critical role in children's lives is often relegated to a less than critical role in teacher training education.

#### 5.2.1.6 Teaching experience of the Kiswahili teachers

The teaching experience of the Kiswahili teachers is presented in the table below.

Table 5.25 Teaching experiences of the Kiswahili teachers

| Years worked | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|--------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 0-5          | 19      | 22  | 6      | 24  |
| 5-10         | 16      | 18  | 1      | 4   |
| 10-15        | 28      | 33  | 6      | 24  |
| 15+          | 23      | 27  | 12     | 48  |
| Total        | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

About 22% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 24% from Lugare had taught for between 0-5 years. 18% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare had taught for between 5-10 years. The majority of Kiswahili teachers 33% from Nairobi and 24% from Lugare had taught for between 10-15 years. Lastly 27% of the Kiswahili

teachers from Nairobi and a majority from Lugare 48% had taught for more than fifteen years. In general the findings show that a majority of the Kiswahili teachers had a sufficiently long experience in teaching.

#### **5.2.1.7 Attendance of in - service courses**

Teachers' training and in-service programmes enhance teachers' professional development by helping them to develop new insights, seek new approaches and become acquainted with new materials (Nyamoata et al 2004: 60). Teachers who are adequately trained on how to implement changes in the curriculum will be receptive and flexible regarding the implementation of the course in the classroom. They will also be able to adapt their curriculum to cater for the emerging situation in the field as they teach (Nyamoata et al 2004: 60). The study sought to find out if the Kiswahili teachers in the study had received any orientation on how to implement the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili language lessons. Table 5.26 reveals the findings.

Table 5.26 In- service course attendance

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 30      | 35  | 5      | 20  |
| No        | 56      | 65  | 20     | 80  |
| Total     | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The results revealed that 35% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare had attended an in-service course while 65% from Nairobi and 80% had never been involved in any in-service course on the implementation of the new syllabus. It seems Kiswahili teachers were made aware of the changes in the syllabus through information delivered by the District Education Officers and the head teachers.

During the data collection period the researcher had an opportunity of attending a one day workshop organized by one of the publishing firms in the country. The researcher observed that the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili was not a priority in the workshop. The orientation was geared mainly at the use of Kiswahili textbooks and how the teachers can help their pupils excel in the Kiswahili examination. This means that children's literature is not at the forefront of the reading programmes in most primary schools. It



seems in this case that the publishers do not bother with whether the storybooks are really read as long as they are bought. The researcher expected the workshop organizers to also discuss the importance of using storybooks in class and how Kiswahili teachers can motivate their pupils to read storybooks.

## **5.2.2 Section B: Literary practices in school**

This section focuses on the responses of the Kiswahili teachers regarding literary practices in class. The discussion in this section will focus on the following sub-topics: Membership in the book selection committee, criteria for selecting Kiswahili storybooks for pupils, approximate number of Kiswahili storybooks in school, levels of classes in which Kiswahili storybooks are used, literary classroom practices in Kiswahili, teaching pupils how to use the library, techniques of motivating readers, selected Kiswahili storybooks used by teachers in class, children's literature and language improvement, children's literature and enrichment of other subjects, teachers' views towards integrating children's literature and Kiswahili language, teachers as readers of children's storybooks, reading or debating clubs in schools, and teacher-parent support in enhancing reading habits.

### **5.2.2.1 Membership in the storybook selection committee**

Involving teachers in the selection of storybooks means that they will bring to the task their knowledge of the subjects they teach, and knowledge of storybooks that can best support their teaching and ways in which pupils can use the storybooks. In the end this will encourage them to play their key part in coming up with a list of books which will serve their needs and those of the pupils. In this study the Kiswahili teachers were asked to show their participation in the selection committee. Table 5.27 shows the number of Kiswahili teachers who are members of the storybook selection committee in their schools.

Table 5.27 Membership in the storybook selection committee

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 37      | 43  | 17     | 68  |
| No        | 49      | 57  | 8      | 32  |
| Total     | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The results in table 5.27 show that 43% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 68% from Lugare are directly involved in selecting storybooks for their schools, while 57% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 32% from Lugare indicated that they were not involved in the selection of storybooks in their schools. It is clear that more Kiswahili teachers from Lugare are involved in the selection of storybooks than those from Nairobi.

#### **5.2.2.2 Criteria for selecting Kiswahili storybooks for pupils**

In relation to selecting books, Kiswahili teachers were asked to state the criteria they use in selecting storybooks for their pupils. Table 5.28 below reveals the findings.

Table 5.28 Criteria for selecting Kiswahili storybooks for pupils

| Criteria for selection | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Author                 | 15      | 18  | 4      | 16  |
| Class level            | 14      | 16  | 11     | 44  |
| Content                | 8       | 9   | 2      | 8   |
| No response            | 49      | 57  | 8      | 32  |
| Total                  | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The above table shows that 18% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare select storybooks depending on the author of the storybooks. 16% of Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 44% from Lugare indicated that they select storybooks according to the class level as stipulated in the ‘Orange book’. It is important to note here that in Kenya, publishers normally indicate on the cover of the storybook the age level or grade levels for which they think that a certain storybook is most suitable. Although this is one way of being guided it could also be misleading in that the storybook the teacher selects could be suitable for an older child or vice versa depending on the upbringing of the child.

On the other hand, when storybooks are selected according to the level of pupils and content it shows that the teachers understand the needs of their pupils. Indeed each child is unique in the way they appreciate stories. However, although the age appropriate criterion suits some children, to others it might not. This is because some pupils are introduced to books much earlier than the others and therefore read books beyond their level. This

happens if a child comes from a family that introduces books to a child in the early years of their lives.

In addition, 9% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 9% from Lugare indicated that they choose a storybook depending on the content of the story as the guiding point. 54% of Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 32% from Lugare did not respond. This may mean that these teachers were not involved in the selection of storybooks in school.

Choosing storybooks according to authors as indicated by some of the Kiswahili teachers implies that they choose books without considering the needs of pupils. This means also that if teachers do not know other authors then their books will not be read. Making children read storybooks will not encourage reading especially if some children do not like the style of writing of the author chosen by the teachers. This therefore means denying pupils a wide range of books to read.

Various scholars interested in children's literature (for instance Huck 1979, Tucker 1991) have proposed criteria for selecting children's books. According to Huck (ibid: 6), the traditional criteria by which a work of fiction for children should be evaluated and selected include such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterization, style and the format of the storybook. On the other hand Tucker (ibid) suggests some basic points about the specific age groups to keep in mind when choosing a child's storybook. What is important, however, is that books should be selected depending on their content. This is because the content will extend the pupils' experience and knowledge of life. This means that the books selected should reflect a variety of values and opinions. In addition the books should reflect the culture of the local community and finally there should be books that introduce the child to the global community. Therefore, care should be taken to ensure that any given class has a balanced diet of storybooks. A teacher who sets out to select storybooks for his or her pupils should examine the books themselves rather than rely entirely on the list provided by the ministry.

#### **5.2.2.3 Approximate number of Kiswahili storybooks in the school library**

The number of books in the school library or class is an indicator of the extent to which schools are prepared to encourage students to read (Elley 1992: 87). It is also very crucial to the acquisition of good reading habits. To determine the availability of Kiswahili

storybooks in school and in class, the Kiswahili teachers were asked to approximate the number of Kiswahili storybooks in the school library. Table 5.29 shows the results.

Table 5.29 Approximate number of Kiswahili storybooks in school

| No. of storybooks | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 0-10              | 7       | 8   | 2      | 8   |
| 10-20             | 9       | 11  | 1      | 4   |
| 30-40             | 8       | 9   | 3      | 12  |
| 50+               | 43      | 50  | 15     | 60  |
| No response       | 19      | 22  | 4      | 16  |
| Total             | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

Table 5.29 above indicates that 8% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 8% from Lugare reported that they had 0-10 Kiswahili storybooks in the school. 11% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare indicated that there were between 10-20 Kiswahili storybooks in the school. 9% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare had between 30-40 Kiswahili storybooks in their school, while half of the Kiswahili teachers 50% from Nairobi and 60% from Lugare reported that they had over 50 Kiswahili storybooks in the school. 22% of the teachers from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare did not respond.

It can be deduced from the Kiswahili teachers report that most schools just have a sufficient number of storybooks in Kiswahili that could be read by all pupils in school. According to the Ministry of Education, the goal is to have one storybook for every two pupils (Ministry of Education 2004: 1). An abundance of storybooks in a school library is an indicator of the extent to which a school emphasizes reading as a pursuit and therefore provides opportunities for pupils to read more.

#### **5.2.2.4 Class levels in which Kiswahili teachers use storybooks**

Teachers were asked to show the levels of classes in which Kiswahili storybooks were used. Table 5.30 shows each of the classes and the use of Kiswahili storybooks.

Table 5.30 Class levels teachers use stories

| class | Nairobi            |         | Lugare             |         |
|-------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
|       | Number of teachers |         | Number of teachers |         |
|       | Yes (%)            | No (%)  | Yes (%)            | No (%)  |
| 1     | 26 (30)            | 60 (70) | 10 (40)            | 15 (60) |
| 2     | 31 (36)            | 55 (64) | 11 (44)            | 14 (56) |
| 3     | 33 (38)            | 53 (62) | 13 (52)            | 12 (48) |
| 4     | 44 (51)            | 42 (49) | 12 (48)            | 13 (52) |
| 5     | 50 (58)            | 36 (42) | 14 (56)            | 11 (44) |
| 6     | 56 (65)            | 30 (35) | 12 (48)            | 13 (52) |
| 7     | 50 (58)            | 36 (42) | 13 (52)            | 12 (48) |
| 8     | 49 (57)            | 37 (43) | 16 (64)            | 9 (36)  |

The results reveal that the majority of the Kiswahili teachers especially those from Nairobi start using storybooks with pupils who are in the upper classes. Very few of them use the stories in lower classes. For instance, in class one, 30% of the teachers from Nairobi and 40% from Lugare use Kiswahili storybooks in class one, while 70% from Nairobi and 60% from Lugare do not use. In class two, 36% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 44% from Lugare use Kiswahili storybooks, while 64% from Nairobi and 56% from Lugare do not use. 38% of the teachers from Nairobi and 52% from Lugare use Kiswahili storybooks in class three while 62% from Nairobi and 48% do not use.

It is possible that in these lower grades many children do not have the ability to read on their own the storybooks in which they are interested in. This can be solved by the teachers reading the storybooks in class for the pupils. The first years of primary schools are the most crucial period for the development of reading. It is therefore important for children to be introduced to storybooks as young as possible. The results reveal that most Kiswahili teachers have not adhered to the instruction of the new syllabus which advocates for pupils to be introduced to stories from the early years of schooling.

In class four, 51% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 48% from Lugare, use Kiswahili storybooks in class while 49% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 52% from Lugare do not use. 58% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 56% from Lugare

use Kiswahili storybooks in class five, while 42% from Nairobi and 44% do not use. In class six, 65% of Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 48% from Lugare use Kiswahili storybooks in class, while 35% from Nairobi and 52% from Lugare do not use. 58% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 52% from Lugare use Kiswahili storybooks in class seven while 42%, from Nairobi and 48% from Lugare do not use stories in class. Lastly, in class eight, 57% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 64% from Lugare use Kiswahili storybooks in class while, 43% from Nairobi and 36% from Lugare do not use. Although more than half of the Kiswahili teachers in upper primary indicate that they use storybooks in class, the findings reveal that integration of the storybooks in the Kiswahili language syllabus seems not to have been fully implemented by all Kiswahili teachers.

#### **5.2.2.5 Literary classroom practices in Kiswahili**

The teachers were asked about classroom practices in relation to using Kiswahili storybooks in class. This involved the strategies used by Kiswahili teachers to motivate their pupils to read and learn from reading Kiswahili storybooks thus enhancing reading habits. Table 5.31 shows some of the strategies employed by the Kiswahili teachers.

Table 5.31 Classroom practices

| Classroom practices       | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Give exercises in reading | 46      | 54  | 16     | 64  |
| Class room discussions    | 18      | 21  | 3      | 12  |
| Reading together in class | 12      | 14  | 4      | 16  |
| No response               | 10      | 11  | 2      | 8   |
| Total                     | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

Table 5.31 above shows that some teachers in the two districts used three techniques in class. These techniques aim at enhancing reading habits among the pupils. For instance, 54% of Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 64% from Lugare indicated that they give exercises in reading to pupils. This is done as a way of checking to ensure that some learning has taken place. Most scholars point out that this kind of activity reduces the pleasure of reading (Greenwood 1988: 5). However, one way of convincing pupils that reading is pleasurable is to make the pupils understand that in order to obtain the pleasure one has to be able to answer the teacher's comprehension check questions. It is because of

this that one finds that most publishers always include comprehension questions at the end of the stories in addition to word glossaries that are included.

21% of Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare employed discussion method. One way in which a child can obtain pleasure in reading is to be able to participate in a class discussion. This gives them an opportunity to express their reactions to their reading and listening experiences.

14% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare read the storybooks together with their pupils in class. Allowing children to participate in reading is fun for them for it is also another way of creating interest and also encouraging the non readers to read. In addition the teacher's reading to children is a valuable part of the language program (Green 1976: 9). The rest of the teachers reported that they do not employ any method in enhancing reading habits in school.

Scholars interested in children's literature have suggested a wide range of reading strategies that can be used during a literature lesson class. These strategies can be used before, while and after reading. For example, Potyaeva (2005: 345) in a paper, "On the way to changing the future" has enumerated various strategies that can be used by a teacher in class. The methods include those that can be used before reading, during the reading session and after reading. The use of these methods will depend on the class level of pupils in every school, their ability to read and the enthusiasm of the teacher.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Before reading</i><br>-brainstorming<br>-anticipation<br>-making prognosis<br>-hypothesizing<br>-modelling<br>-demonstration<br>-think aloud<br>-question- discussion<br>-choosing a book<br>-independent reading | <i>While reading</i><br>-reading aloud<br>-singing parts of the text<br>-guided reading<br>-time out<br>-read-stop-discuss<br>-chapter tour<br>-self monitoring<br>-visualizing<br>-graphic organizers<br>-listening and reading<br>-reading in pairs | <i>After reading</i><br>-comprehension strategies<br>-inferences<br>-making connection to other texts and background information.<br>-text organizing strategies<br>-language development. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Source: Tatiana Potyaeva, (2005: 345) "On the way to Changing the Future"

Greenwood (1988: 11) points out that the 'pre-reading' stage whets the pupils' appetites and stimulates curiosity. It is a way of creating motivation to read and at the same time helps lead the pupils into understanding the story. This stage can provide a need to read in

order to complete an activity or confirm an idea. The ‘while reading’ stage increases the pupils’ awareness and encourages them to look more closely at the story before its completion. It helps the pupils search for meaning from the story. It also helps the teacher to access the understanding of the pupils. Lastly, the ‘after reading’ stage encourages reflection upon what has been read and enables the pupils to expand and enhance their perceptions. All three stages are important because they provide opportunity for the pupils to communicate and interact amongst themselves.

Huck (1979: 641) maintains that children learn more about books if they have an opportunity to interpret them in ways that are meaningful to them through art or drama, talk, writing and creating games. These kinds of activities should be encouraged so that they can enhance pupils’ delight in storybooks.

#### **5.2.2.6 Do Kiswahili teachers teach their pupils how to use a library?**

Studies have indicated that teachers and teacher librarians can help improve reading skills and improve attitude towards reading by initiating reading skills and extending those reading skills even further by giving instructions on library use (Abeyrathna & Zainab 2004: 3). Training pupils in the library use is intended to make the pupils capable of using a library for finding information (Ray 1990: 67). The Kiswahili teachers were asked to state if at all they taught their pupils how to use the library since there is a 35 minutes period as library hour in all the primary schools. Table 5.32 reveals the results.

Table 5.32 Do Kiswahili teachers teach their pupils how to use a library

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 59      | 69  | 17     | 68  |
| No        | 27      | 31  | 8      | 32  |
| Total     | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The results show that most of the Kiswahili teachers give instruction on library use to their pupils. This comprised of 69% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 68% from Lugare reporting positively. The rest of the Kiswahili teachers comprising of 31% from Nairobi and 32% do not teach their pupils how to use the library.



When asked further for the reasons why they do not teach pupils how to use the library, most teachers said that there is a library teacher, some said they had no access to a library while others reported that it was due to lack of knowledge in library management. Ray (1990) has enumerated a number of information that should be brought to the notice of pupils in all schools that have a reading programme. These include passing information regarding the number of storybooks available in the library in each category to the pupils, teaching pupils how to use the catalogues, showing them methods of choosing the right storybooks, teaching them how to maintain and handle books and finally teaching the pupils reading techniques.

#### **5.2.2.7 Children's literature in Kiswahili and Language improvement**

It is sometimes argued that a justification for the teaching of literature is its value in promoting language development (Carter & Long 1992: 2). This means that literature can be an instrument for use in connection with the teaching of vocabulary. In this regard, the study sought to find out from the Kiswahili teachers if there was any improvement in Kiswahili language since the introduction of the integration programme in the new Kiswahili syllabus. Table 5.33 below shows the teachers' views.

Table 5.33 Children's literature in Kiswahili and Language improvement

| Teachers' responses                                | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| The pupils' language has improved                  | 48      | 56  | 13     | 52  |
| Learning in Kiswahili has become interesting       | 13      | 15  | 4      | 16  |
| There is free interaction during Kiswahili lessons | 3       | 4   | 1      | 4   |
| Creativity has increased                           | 1       | 1   | 0      | 0   |
| No response                                        | 21      | 24  | 7      | 28  |
| Total                                              | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The findings reveal that most Kiswahili teachers do acknowledge the value of literature in improving the language of the students. The findings show that 56% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 52% from Lugare noted some improvement in the Kiswahili language use by the pupils. Other teachers noted that learning in Kiswahili had become interesting. This comprised of 15% of Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 16% from

Lugare. 4% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare noted that there was now free interaction in class. This means that students are able to express themselves in class through discussions and group work. One teacher, 1% from Nairobi noted that reading of storybooks has improved the creativity of pupils. As pupils are exposed to a wide variety of literature they begin to enjoy using some of these forms in their writing.

Numerous studies have given evidence of the link between the availability of books and developing sensitivity to language (Elley 1996, Huck 1979: 670). Children's appreciation of the writing of other people increases as they read widely and have many opportunities to create their own stories. Elley (1996) in his study reported that there are many potential benefits in a good book, provided it grasps and holds student's interest. Not only do students expand their language by reading widely, they also learn much about other times and places, stimulate their imagination, gain insights into human nature, are able to follow their specific interests and hobbies, enjoy an escape from unpleasant realities. He concluded that, once children learn to appreciate books, they will read more often and improve their skills. Also Montagnes (quoted in Tella & Akande 2007: 124)) gave the report of a study conducted by READ Educational Trust in South Africa. The report according to him states that children in classes with classroom libraries outperformed control school counterparts by as much as 189 per cent, and were ahead by 187 months in reading scores and two years in writing scores. Indeed reports from the Kenya National Examination Council 2009 reveals that there was marked improvement in Kiswahili language composition writing and Kiswahili objective results at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination level (The Standard newspaper 2009).

#### **5.2.2.8 Relating children's literature in Kiswahili to other subjects**

Teachers were asked to state their opinion regarding the relationship between children's literature and other subjects. This was in order to show how the content areas of the primary curriculum are also represented in the storybooks. Table 5.34 shows the teachers' views.

Table 5.34 Children's literature and enrichment of other subjects

| Responses                                | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|------------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Enhances understanding in other subjects | 55      | 64  | 17     | 68  |
| Storybooks boost reading culture         | 12      | 14  | 1      | 4   |
| No response                              | 19      | 22  | 7      | 28  |
| Total                                    | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

In table 5.34 above, the majority of the Kiswahili teachers comprising of 64% from Nairobi and 68% from Lugare indicated that children's literature enhances understanding in other subjects. On the other hand 14% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare see children's literature as contributing to the culture of reading. The rest of the teachers did not respond.

Various scholars (c.f. Hurst 2004, Johns & Davis 1990) have shown the relationship between children's literature and other subjects. For instance, Carol Hurst has provided a list of children's books that can be used to teach other subjects like History, Geography, Mathematics and Social studies. The use of storybooks enhances understanding in other subjects by bringing the subject close to the pupils. For instance, stories help the pupils understand their environment. In addition the stories can provide materials through which problem-solving skills are nurtured and curiosity challenged.

#### **5.2.2.9 Kiswahili teachers' views towards integrating children's literature and Kiswahili language**

Kiswahili teachers were asked to state their views on the new policy of integrating Kiswahili children's literature into Kiswahili language. Table 5.35 reveals the Kiswahili teachers' views on integrating children's literature in Kiswahili language lesson.

Table 5.35 Kiswahili teachers' views on integrating children's literature in Kiswahili language lesson.

| Teachers' responses                                             | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Builds positive attitudes towards Kiswahili                     | 55      | 64  | 17     | 68  |
| Assists pupils in improving their language skills in Kiswahili. | 17      | 20  | 3      | 12  |
| No response                                                     | 14      | 16  | 5      | 20  |
| Total                                                           | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

In this study 64% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 68% from Lugare felt that integrating children's literature written in Kiswahili builds positive attitudes towards Kiswahili. This is followed by 17% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare who felt that integrating children's literature assists pupils in improving their language skills in Kiswahili. The rest of the teachers did not respond.

An interview with some Kiswahili teachers revealed that most pupils have a negative attitude towards Kiswahili. The negative attitudes depicted towards Kiswahili can be attributed to the social linguistic history of the country where during the colonial period, European languages became the languages of the masters, prestige, power, high position and status (Onyango 2003: 59). Thus for a long time in Kenya, this aspect did not cultivate favourable attitudes towards Kiswahili. This is because, although Kiswahili is a national language, it is normally associated with low education, while English is associated with high education (Onyango 2003: 61). Therefore by integrating children's literature in Kiswahili into the Kiswahili language program it becomes important in the pupils' lives because they can now experience the language and use it to further extend their experiences. Thus children's literature can be used as a catalyst to creating positive attitudes towards Kiswahili. Creating positive attitudes towards Kiswahili as the national language is one of the aims of teaching Kiswahili in primary school as stated in the Kiswahili syllabus (2002: 126).

#### 5.2.2.10 Kiswahili teachers as literary models

For teachers to encourage reading, they need to be enthusiastic readers of children's books themselves and to have a positive attitude towards storybooks and reading. It is the task of the teacher to bring pupils and storybooks together. This means that in addition to knowing his pupils for whom the storybooks are intended, the teacher should know these storybooks by way of reading them. In this regard, the habit of reading children's books among Kiswahili teachers was measured in terms of the number of Kiswahili children's storybooks read in a term. Table 5.36 reveals the findings.

Table 5.36 Number of Kiswahili storybooks read by Kiswahili teachers in a term

| No. of books | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|--------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 1            | 15      | 17  | 6      | 24  |
| 2            | 12      | 14  | 4      | 16  |
| 3            | 10      | 12  | 3      | 12  |
| 4            | 8       | 9   | 2      | 8   |
| 5            | 7       | 8   | 1      | 4   |
| 0            | 34      | 40  | 9      | 36  |
| Total        | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The results in Table 5.36 show that a number of Kiswahili teachers do not consider reading Kiswahili children's storybooks as important, this is evident with the response of 17% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 24% from Lugare who indicated they have read one Kiswahili storybook in a term. 14% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare have read 2 storybooks. The study also revealed that 12% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare had read 3 Kiswahili storybooks in a term. Those who have read 4 storybooks comprised of 9% from Nairobi and 8% from Lugare. 8% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare read 5 storybooks in a term. The rest of the teachers 40% from Nairobi and 36% from Lugare had not read any children's storybook written in Kiswahili.

Teachers play a big role as models when it comes to reading storybooks. However it is clear from this results that Kiswahili teachers do not have good reading habits and a culture of reading children's storybooks. They seem to have no interest in making readers.

Teachers need to build their knowledge of children's books so that they are familiar with titles that are current and those that are familiar with children. At the same time they need to know the books that are culturally diverse which they can introduce to their pupils. The skill of recommending Kiswahili storybooks to pupils lies not only in knowing the child and his interest, but in knowing the books as well. It is vital for the teachers to show the pupils that they value the books that they read and can be in a position to discuss the content of the storybooks with the pupils.

#### **5.2.2.11 Reading or debating clubs in schools**

According to Elley (1992: 63) having a drama club in a school is one of the indicators of policies designed to encourage reading habits. Discussions in the reading or drama clubs can lead to improvement of the children's aesthetic sensibilities. In this study, teachers were asked to say whether their schools had a reading or a drama club. Table 5.37 shows the findings.

Table 5.37 Reading and or debating clubs in schools

| Response | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes      | 44      | 51  | 6      | 24  |
| No       | 42      | 49  | 19     | 76  |
| Total    | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

Table 5.37 indicates that the majority of schools did not have either a reading club or a drama club. Only 51% of Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 24% from Lugare indicated that there was either a reading or debating club in the school. Those Kiswahili teachers who indicated that their school did not have either a reading or drama club were 49% from Nairobi and 76% from Lugare. Having a readership club in a school ensures that reading is stimulated and maintained. The readership club would include activities such as story writing, storytelling, imaginative drawing, reading storybooks, poems and even acting.

#### **5.2.2.12 Teacher-parent support in enhancing reading habits**

Parental involvement in a school involves the way parents can support their children's reading by responding to school obligations such as buying extra storybooks for their children (Cotton & Wikeland 1989: 5). Parents can also help children to improve their

reading by providing encouragement, modelling desired behaviour such as reading for pleasure (Cotton & Wikeland 1989: 5).

In order to measure the extent of parental involvement in enhancing reading habits in school, the study sought to find out about the parents' participation in enhancing reading habits. Teachers were asked to indicate if they suggest to parents ways of encouraging their children to read storybooks and even buy some storybooks for them. Table 5.38 shows the findings.

Table 5.38 Teacher-parent support in enhancing reading habits

| Response | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes      | 77      | 90  | 19     | 76  |
| No       | 9       | 10  | 6      | 24  |
| Total    | 86      | 100 | 25     | 100 |

The results show that 90% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 76% from Lugare involve parents in the reading activities of the pupils by suggesting to them to encourage their children to read storybooks. 10% of the Kiswahili teachers from Nairobi and 24% reported that they did not involve parents at all. Teachers who do not interact with parents fail to understand the important role played by parents in enhancing reading habits among children. They should encourage the parents to play an active role in inculcating reading habits in their children.

### **5.3 Findings from pupils' responses to questionnaire items**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by examining the reading habits of pupils both in school and at home. Reading habits refers to the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and tastes of reading (Tella & Akande 2007: 121). It involves a pattern with which an individual organizes his or her reading. Therefore, reading habits are those tendencies in reading behaviour that one creates for him or herself and especially reading for pleasure.

The reading habits were measured in terms of the amount of reading materials that a pupil has in Kiswahili both at school and at home, the frequency of reading and the pupils' attitudes towards reading. Therefore the study set out to find out the availability and access

of reading materials in Kiswahili in primary schools for pupils both in school and at home. Access to books refers to the availability of quality literature in classroom, school community or home (Tella & Akande 2007: 122). When children have many books to select from it means they have an adequate access to books.

Other than focusing on storybooks in Kiswahili alone, the study was interested in other relevant literature that is aimed at enhancing the reading habits among children such as newspapers and magazines. The study also set out to evaluate the attitudes of the pupils towards reading in order to understand how this literature captures their imagination. By drawing on the response of the children, the study intended to give prominence to the target reader whose feedback is important for all stakeholders in children's literature.

The pupils' questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section one which had a total number of eleven questions, sought to find out the pupils' demographic information. The data was based on the following variables: location of school, type of school, sex, age, number of siblings at home and finally the level of education of parents or guardians.

Section two of the questionnaire was aimed at obtaining information about the pupils' literary practices in Kiswahili at school and at home. It carries the backbone of the study. This section focused on major themes such as attitudes and values towards reading, public library use and visits to books exhibition events and lastly the home environment. These were then categorized into smaller sub-titles. The sub-titles under attitudes and values included; reading enjoyment, the number of books read in a term, purpose for reading, sharing of books with friends, when and how they read and ownership of a reading diary. The sub-title on library use included eliciting information on availability and use of public library and book exhibition attendance. The home environment elicited information on ownership of books at home, parent's reading habits, role of sibling in encouraging reading habits and lastly reading of newspapers at home.

### **5.3.1 Section A: Pupils' demographic information**

This section presents the demographic information of the pupils who participated in the study.



#### 5.3.1.1 The study population

A total number of 1860 pupils participated in the study against the targeted sample of 1920 pupils. This constituted 97% success rate. The sample selected for the study consisted of 48 primary schools; 33 from Nairobi and 15 from Lugare district. The table below shows the number of pupils who participated in the study according to districts.

Table 5.39 Pupils' participation according to districts

| District | Number of pupils | %   |
|----------|------------------|-----|
| Nairobi  | 1315             | 71  |
| Lugare   | 545              | 29  |
| Total    | 1860             | 100 |

Table 5.39 shows the location of schools attended by the pupils in the survey, where 71% of the pupils were from Nairobi district while 29% were from Lugare district in Western province.

#### 5.3.1.2 Type of school

The pupils were also asked to indicate the type of school they attended. This is reflected in the table below.

Table 5.40 Pupils' participation according to type of school

| Type of school | Number of pupils | %   |
|----------------|------------------|-----|
| Public         | 1305             | 70  |
| Private        | 555              | 30  |
| Total          | 1860             | 100 |

Both public and private schools participated in the study, where 70% were pupils from the public schools while 30% were from the private schools.

#### 5.3.1.3 Age of pupils

Table 5.41 below indicates the age level of pupils who participated in the study.

Table 5.41 Age of pupils who participated in the study

| Age     | 5  | 6   | 7   | 8    | 9   | 10   | 11   | 12   | 13   | 14   | 15   | 16  | 17  | 18  | Total |
|---------|----|-----|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Nairobi | 2  | 49  | 109 | 119  | 131 | 150  | 156  | 160  | 215  | 146  | 60   | 14  | 2   | 2   | 1315  |
| %       | .2 | 3.7 | 8.2 | 9    | 9.9 | 11.4 | 11.9 | 12.2 | 16.3 | 11.1 | 4.6  | 1.1 | .2  | .2  | 100   |
| Lugare  | 1  | 14  | 33  | 70   | 49  | 60   | 47   | 53   | 69   | 51   | 58   | 22  | 12  | 6   | 545   |
| %       | .2 | 2.6 | 6.1 | 12.8 | 9   | 11   | 8.6  | 9.7  | 12.7 | 9.4  | 10.6 | 4   | 2.2 | 1.1 | 100   |
| Total   | 3  | 63  | 142 | 189  | 180 | 210  | 203  | 213  | 284  | 197  | 118  | 36  | 14  | 8   | 1860  |
| %       | .1 | 3.3 | 8   | 10   | 10  | 11   | 11   | 11   | 15   | 11   | 6    | 2.  | .7  | .4  | 100   |

The age of pupils who participated in this study ranged from 5-18 years. In Kenya, primary education is offered to children between the ages of six and fourteen years (Ministry of Education 2004: 2). Normally the official age of entry to primary school in Kenya is six years. By class eight most students are expected to be 13 years. The results reveal that quite a number of classes both in Nairobi and Lugare have pupils who are slightly older than the expected official age. By implication it means that some pupils start school when they are older than the stipulated time of starting school. The age differences can pose quite a number of problems when a teacher is selecting storybooks for the pupils of her class who are in a certain age group.

#### 5.3.1.4 Gender distribution

Table 5.42 shows the pupils' participation in terms of gender distribution.

Table 5.42 Pupils participation according to gender

| Gender | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|--------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Girls  | 722     | 55  | 291    | 53  |
| Boys   | 593     | 45  | 254    | 47  |
| Total  | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

The above table shows that 55% of the participants were female pupils from Nairobi while 53% females were from Lugare. The number of male pupils who participated in the study comprised of 45% from Nairobi and 47% from Lugare.

### 5.3.1.5 Siblings in the family

The pupils were asked to indicate the number of siblings they had in their families. The number of siblings in the various families was given as shown in the following table.

Table 5.43 Number of siblings in the family

| Number of siblings / District | 1  | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | No Response | Total |
|-------------------------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-------------|-------|
| Nairobi                       | 87 | 304 | 351 | 226 | 151 | 81 | 40 | 22 | 25 | 9  | 19          | 1315  |
| %                             | 7  | 23  | 27  | 17  | 11  | 6  | 3  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1           | 100   |
| Lugare                        | 10 | 54  | 79  | 77  | 87  | 87 | 55 | 44 | 23 | 14 | 15          | 545   |
| %                             | 2  | 10  | 14  | 14  | 16  | 16 | 10 | 8  | 4  | 3  | 3           | 100   |

In table 5.43 above, most pupils living in Nairobi have either 2 or 3 siblings. This comprised of 23% and 27% respectively. This was followed by 17% of pupils who have four siblings, 11% had five siblings, 7% had one sibling, 6% had six siblings, 3% had seven, 2% had nine another 2% had eight, 1% had ten and 1% did not respond may be because they did not have siblings or they chose not to provide a concrete answer.

In Lugare most pupils had either five or six siblings. This comprised of 16% and another 16% respectively. This was followed by 14% who had three siblings, and another 14% who had four siblings, 10% had seven siblings, another 10% had two siblings, 8% had eight siblings, 4% had nine siblings, 3% had ten siblings, 2% had one sibling and 3% did not respond.

### 5.3.1.6 Level of education of father, mother or guardian

Among all family background factors in the education of a child, the parent's education is a determined factor to children's reading abilities (Chiu & Ko 2005: 3). The education level of parents would have a strong effect on pupils' achievement Baker et al 1995 (quoted in Chiu & Ko 2005: 3). In this regard, pupils were asked to indicate their parents' or guardians' level of education. Parental education indicates the higher level of educational attainment between father's, mother's and guardians' education. Five levels of educational attainment were distinguished: primary, secondary, middle college, university and no formal education. Tables 5.44, 5.45 and 5.46 indicate the various educational levels of father, mother and guardians of pupils who participated in the study.

Table 5.44 Level of education of father

| District / Level of education | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Primary                       | 56      | 5   | 73     | 14  |
| Secondary                     | 196     | 15  | 190    | 35  |
| Middle college                | 225     | 17  | 119    | 22  |
| University                    | 453     | 34  | 74     | 13  |
| Non-formal                    | 15      | 1   | 3      | 1   |
| No response                   | 370     | 28  | 86     | 15  |
| Total                         | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

In table 5.44 above the results reveal that 5% of pupils from Nairobi and 14% from Lugare indicated that their fathers have attained primary level education. Pupils whose fathers have secondary education comprised of 15% from Nairobi and 35% from Lugare. 17% pupils from Nairobi and 22% from Lugare said their fathers have middle level training. The majority of pupils 34% from Nairobi indicated that their fathers have university education, compared to 13% from Lugare. 1% of pupils from Nairobi and 1% from Lugare indicated that their fathers have no formal education. 28% from Nairobi and 15% from Lugare did not respond.

Table 5.45 Level of education of mother

| District / Level of education | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Primary                       | 78      | 6   | 113    | 20  |
| Secondary                     | 224     | 17  | 195    | 35  |
| Middle level college          | 222     | 17  | 92     | 17  |
| University                    | 342     | 26  | 27     | 5   |
| No formal education           | 13      | 1   | 4      | 1   |
| No response                   | 436     | 33  | 114    | 20  |
| Total                         | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

In Table 5.45 above, 6% of the pupils from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare indicated that their mothers have acquired primary level education. Pupils whose mothers have secondary education comprised of 17% from Nairobi and 35% from Lugare. 17% of pupils from

Nairobi and 17% from Lugare said their mothers have middle level training. The majority of pupils comprising of 26% from Nairobi and 5% from Lugare indicated that their mothers have university education, while 1% of pupils from Nairobi and 1% from Lugare indicated that their mothers have no formal education. The rest of the pupils did not respond.

Table 5.46 Level of education of guardian

| District / Level of education | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Primary                       | 20      | 1   | 4      | 1   |
| Secondary                     | 11      | 1   | 5      | 1   |
| Middle level college          | 13      | 1   | 3      | 1   |
| University                    | 13      | 1   | 3      | 1   |
| No formal education           | 1       | 0   | 0      | 0   |
| No response                   | 1257    | 95  | 530    | 96  |
| Total                         | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.46 above shows that 2% of pupils from Nairobi and 1% from Lugare indicated that their guardians have primary level education. Pupils whose guardians have secondary education comprised of 1% from Nairobi and 1% from Lugare. 1% of the pupils from Nairobi and 1% from Lugare said their guardians have middle level training, and only 1% pupils from Nairobi and 1% from Lugare indicated that their guardians have university education, while one pupil from Nairobi indicated that their guardian has no formal education.

The results in general reveal that most of the pupils come from families where their parents have some form of formal education and therefore the pupils are not the first generation of readers. It is therefore possible for these parents to assist and guide their children in the reading process. It is only in situation where members of a family who cannot read or appreciate the value of reading that such pupils face problems of guidance. It is in such circumstances that pupils give up reading when confronted with discouragements in reading. On the other hand, parents who can read and value their children reading can sit with their children and listen to them as they read or tell stories. The parents can make corrections that are helpful to the child or encourage them to express themselves openly and clearly.

### 5.3.2 Section B: Literary practices in school and at home

This section focuses on the responses of the pupils regarding literary practices in class and at home. The questionnaire for this section was designed to elicit responses from pupils in relation to the following areas: reading enjoyment, the number of books read in a term and during school holidays, reasons for reading, reading preferences and interesting issues in the stories read, sharing of books with friends, when and how they read and ownership of a reading diary, availability and use of public library and book exhibition attendance, ownership of books at home, reading of newspapers, parents' reading habits, and lastly role of sibling in encouraging reading habits.

#### 5.3.2.1 Reading enjoyment

In order to determine pupils' reading habits, the pupils were first asked to state if they liked reading storybooks. Table 5.47 reveals the attitudes of pupils towards reading.

Table 5.47 Reading enjoyment

| Response | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes      | 1269    | 97  | 526    | 97  |
| No       | 46      | 3   | 19     | 3   |
| Total    | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

The majority of pupils from Nairobi who comprised of 97% and a similar figure of 97% from Lugare reported that they enjoyed reading, while only 3% of the pupils from Nairobi and 3% from Lugare said they did not like reading. The findings reveal that most of the pupils who participated in the study have an interest in reading storybooks. However, something to note is that pupils in this study may have considered reading of both textbooks and storybooks as being one and the same thing. In this case they will read because it ensures academic success. As Makenzi (2004: 1) notes, reading in Kenya has for a long time been closely linked to textbooks. As such reading has always been taught as a skill to be employed only in school time pursuits.

The pupils who said that they did not like reading were asked to give reasons for not enjoying reading. In their response they considered reading as a waste of time and some indicated that they did not have storybooks. For these pupils who consider reading as a waste of time, such pupils need to be convinced that one can only learn to read by reading

more storybooks. Some pupils might not like reading due to the fact that they find it difficult to master the skill of learning to read. Such pupils end up leaving the school without having read storybooks if they have no one to encourage them to read.

### 5.3.2.2 Reasons for reading

Similarly, those who answered ‘Yes’ were asked to state why they liked reading. The reasons given are distributed as shown in Table 5.48.

Table 5.48 Reasons for reading

| Reasons for reading                             | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| To improve composition / <i>Insha</i> * writing | 348     | 27  | 121    | 22  |
| To improve on language                          | 260     | 20  | 110    | 20  |
| They entertain                                  | 209     | 16  | 91     | 17  |
| They are educative                              | 110     | 8   | 44     | 8   |
| Will help me get a job                          | 101     | 8   | 39     | 7   |
| Help pass exams                                 | 64      | 5   | 14     | 3   |
| Keeps me busy                                   | 58      | 4   | 0      | 0   |
| It is essential                                 | 43      | 3   | 15     | 3   |
| To learn lessons in life                        | 29      | 2   | 26     | 5   |
| Helps me be creative                            | 27      | 2   | 12     | 2   |
| They encourage                                  | 10      | 1   | 8      | 2   |
| Teaches me about other peoples’ culture         | 10      | 1   | 2      | 1   |
| No Response                                     | 46      | 3   | 63     | 12  |
| Total                                           | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

\* *Insha* refers to composition written in Kiswahili

Table 5.48 provides more information on the attitudes of reading of Kenyan children. The results show that 27% of the pupils from Nairobi and 22% from Lugare have the perception that reading is done in order to improve in the writing of composition in Kiswahili and English. 20% of the pupils from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare read to improve in language skills. 16% from Nairobi and 17% from Lugare believe that they get entertained when they read. 8% from Nairobi and 8% from Lugare read for educative purposes which means they

gain more knowledge even in other subjects. This kind of reading is referred to by Rosenblatt (1995: 32) as reading for efferent purposes. This means one reads in order to get certain information from a book. Books and reading help children to keep abreast of what is happening around them and the world (Osazee 2004: 10).

The responses further indicated that 8% of the pupils from Nairobi and 7% from Lugare read because they believed that reading will help them get jobs. Other reasons given by pupils for reading included; reading in order to pass examinations, 5% from Nairobi and 3% from Lugare. Only 4% of the pupils from Nairobi indicated that reading is one way of keeping them busy. Some pupils felt that it is a requirement for them so they have to read, these comprised of 3% from Nairobi and 3% from Lugare. 2% from Nairobi and 5% from Lugare said that reading helps them to learn lessons in life. This implies that through reading one might find situations that one may or may not have experienced and the stories could therefore be used to inform the reader who is going through certain experiences that other people experience the same problems.

Other pupils felt that reading helps them to be creative. This comprised of 2% of pupils from Nairobi and 2% from Lugare. Some pupils reported that the stories are encouraging. This was reported by 1% from Nairobi and 2% from Lugare; and finally some pupils indicated that reading helps them to know other peoples' culture, thus 1% from Nairobi and 1% from Lugare. These pupils who say that reading storybooks helps them to learn about other peoples' culture are placing emphasis on literature as a means of broadening one's knowledge of people and society (Rosenblatt 1995: 37). It reflects their curiosity about life, a curiosity common with younger children and pre-adolescents. Hence reading of children's literature enables the pupils to accomplish some of the educational objectives that have been set out including promoting respect and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures and also promoting international consciousness by fostering positive attitudes towards other countries (see introduction of this study). The rest of the pupils did not respond.

In general however, the findings show that most pupils read for utilitarian purposes. This means reading is geared towards achieving success in school, such as becoming good at composition writing and language improvement. However in order to develop a reading culture, reading for pleasure must also be promoted from an early age.



### 5.3.2.3 Number of Kiswahili storybooks read

The habit of reading was measured in terms of the number of Kiswahili storybooks read during the term that the research was undertaken, that is the third term of 2007 and during the previous term that is, the second term of the same year. Tables 5.49, 5.50, and 5.51 reveal the number of storybooks read by the pupils.

Table 5.49 Number of Kiswahili storybooks read in the third term of 2007

| Number of storybooks read | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 1                         | 160     | 12  | 108    | 20  |
| 2                         | 259     | 20  | 153    | 28  |
| 3                         | 288     | 22  | 130    | 24  |
| 4                         | 485     | 37  | 89     | 16  |
| Did not read              | 123     | 9   | 65     | 12  |
| Total                     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

During the third term when this study was carried out, the pupils who indicated that they had read one Kiswahili storybook were 12% from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare. 20% of pupils from Nairobi and 28% from Lugare had read two Kiswahili storybooks. Those who had read three Kiswahili storybooks comprised of 22% from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare, while those who had read four storybooks during that term were 37% from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare. 9% of pupils from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare had not read any storybook in Kiswahili that term.

The results show that a majority of the pupils had read more than two storybooks. However a closer look at the responses shows a different revelation from what the pupils gave when the majority said they like reading. As it was noted earlier most pupils considered reading of textbooks and storybook as one and the same thing. One can conclude that in actual fact, these pupils are not reading enough storybooks considering that there is a library hour every week which is set aside for reading for leisure.

Table 5.50 Number of Kiswahili storybooks read during second term of 2007

| Number of storybooks read | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 1                         | 121     | 9   | 81     | 15  |
| 2                         | 207     | 16  | 108    | 20  |
| 3                         | 303     | 23  | 124    | 23  |
| 4                         | 527     | 40  | 157    | 29  |
| Did not read              | 157     | 12  | 75     | 13  |
| Total                     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Pupils were asked to indicate the number of storybooks that they had read during the previous term, the results show that 9% of the pupils from Nairobi and 15% from Lugare had read only one Kiswahili storybook. 16% from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare had read two Kiswahili storybooks. Those who had read three Kiswahili storybooks comprised of 23% from Nairobi and 23% from Lugare, while those who had read four storybooks during that term were 40% from Nairobi and 29% from Lugare. 12% pupils from Nairobi and 13% from Lugare did not read any Kiswahili storybook that term.

A look at the reading habits in the two terms shows that in Nairobi those pupils who read one Kiswahili storybook were more in third term than second term. This also increased with those who read two storybooks. However the number of pupils who read three and four Kiswahili storybooks in third term declined. Those pupils who read storybooks during school holidays demonstrate some form of a habit of reading in their maturing life.

In Lugare the number of pupils who read one, two and three storybooks in second term increased in third term. But the reading declined for those who read four books. The change could be attributed to pupils preparing for end of year examination in third term. A number of pupils indicated that they had not read any storybook during the two terms in school. This reveals that some schools do not put emphasis on reading for pleasure and so the pupils can sail through school without any extra reading.

#### 5.3.2.4 Number of Kiswahili storybooks read during school holidays

In addition to reading when school was in progress, the pupils were also asked to reveal their reading habits during the school holiday. Table 5.51 below shows the number of Kiswahili storybooks read during the school holiday of August 2007.

Table 5.51 Number of Kiswahili storybooks read during school holiday

| Number of storybooks read | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| 1                         | 241     | 18  | 139    | 26  |
| 2                         | 258     | 20  | 134    | 25  |
| 3                         | 254     | 19  | 130    | 24  |
| 4                         | 294     | 22  | 68     | 12  |
| Did not read              | 268     | 21  | 74     | 13  |
| Total                     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

The results in table 5.51 reveal that during the school holiday, 18% of the pupils from Nairobi and 26% from Lugare had read only one Kiswahili storybook. 20% from Nairobi and 25% from Lugare had read two Kiswahili storybooks. Those who had read three Kiswahili storybooks comprised of 19% from Nairobi and 24% from Lugare. Those pupils who had read four books during the August school holiday were 22% from Nairobi and 13% from Lugare. 21% pupils from Nairobi and 13% did not read any Kiswahili storybook during the school holiday.

The results reveal that most of the pupils do not read storybooks during school holiday although this is the time they are expected to have free time when they can read for pleasure. The reasons for this kind of situation could be attributed to lack of Kiswahili storybooks at home and to the fact that in most schools, pupils are not allowed to borrow storybooks to read at home for fear of losing or damaging them as was revealed by some head teachers in this study (see 5.1.2.7). In addition pupils have little time to practice readership activities because most of the free time is used in revising examination oriented subjects.

In a study carried out by Yilmaz (2002) on 'Reading and library usage habits of the students whose mother tongue is Turkish in Vienna, Austria', she classified book readers in four groups according to the number of books they read in a year. She noted that the heavy

readers read 24 storybooks or more in a year or two books per month; the moderate readers read between 7-23 storybooks per year which amounts to roughly, one storybook per month. The rare readers read between 1-6 books per year or one book every two month and lastly there are the non readers. According to Yilmaz's evaluation, the Kenyan children can be placed in the category of rare readers, since most of them have only read 1-4 books in third term and the previous term. This indicates that although pupils say they like reading, the amount of Kiswahili storybooks that they read reflects a different picture.

### 5.3.2.5 Language choice of storybooks read

Kiswahili as the national language of Kenya and the only language taught as a compulsory and examinable subject in the education system of Kenya was of great interest to this study. The participants were therefore asked to show their reading habits in regard to language of publication of storybooks they select to read. This could reveal information on the attitude towards Kiswahili in regard to reading habits of the pupils. Table 5.52 shows the results of the study.

Table 5.52 Language choice of storybooks read

| Language                   | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Kiswahili                  | 118     | 9   | 123    | 23  |
| English                    | 412     | 31  | 80     | 15  |
| Both Kiswahili and English | 767     | 59  | 329    | 60  |
| No Response                | 18      | 1   | 13     | 2   |
| Total                      | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

The results show that 9% of pupils from Nairobi and 23% from Lugare preferred reading stories that were written in Kiswahili. 31% of the participants from Nairobi and 15% from Lugare preferred to read stories written in English. The majority of respondents 59% from Nairobi and 60% from Lugare preferred to read stories written in both Kiswahili and English.

What is noticeable here is that the pupils try to balance their reading in relation to the official languages of the school; English and Kiswahili. This is so because in Kenya, English is the language of instruction while Kiswahili is taught as a compulsory and

examinable subject from class one to secondary school and it is also the national language. However, most pupils from Nairobi seem to prefer reading stories written in English only as seen in the results with 31% from Nairobi indicating that they read books written in English language only. This could be explained in various ways. One of them could be that pupils prefer storybooks written in English or that due to scarcity of variety of storybooks in Kiswahili, pupils end up going for storybooks written in English (See for example 5.1.2.1).

### 5.3.2.6 Preferred Kiswahili storybooks

The study also sought to find out the most preferred storybooks in Kiswahili read by the pupils. Table 5.53 shows the titles of Kiswahili storybooks mentioned by over five respondents per title as their preferred storybooks. Some of the storybooks are cross classified against the list in the *Approved List of Primary and Secondary Schools Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials 2007* published by the Ministry of Education as a way of showing the choices made by pupils according to class level. This gives us a picture of the level of pupils who read these storybooks.

Table 5.53 Preferred Kiswahili storybooks

| Title of storybook           | Nairobi<br>Number of<br>pupils | Lugare<br>Number of<br>pupils | Suggested class Level by the<br>Ministry of Education |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Sungura Mjanja (2003)</i> | 105                            | 52                            | 2                                                     |
| <i>Kuku na Mwewe (2001)</i>  | 67                             | 48                            | 1-3                                                   |
| <i>Abunuasi mtu zuzu</i>     | 45                             | 0                             | -                                                     |
| <i>Fisi na Sungura</i>       | 38                             | 18                            | 4                                                     |
| <i>Nyani Mdogo(1997)</i>     | 37                             | 15                            | 1-3                                                   |
| <i>Paka na Panya</i>         | 32                             | 6                             | 3                                                     |
| <i>Ndoto ya Amerika</i>      | 30                             | 23                            | 6-8                                                   |
| <i>Karamu Mbinguni</i>       | 24                             | 7                             | 7-8                                                   |
| <i>Usicheze na Moto</i>      | 21                             | 4                             | 4                                                     |
| <i>Hekaya za Abunuasi</i>    | 20                             | 18                            | 8                                                     |
| <i>Siku Njema</i>            | 18                             | 16                            | *                                                     |
| <i>Sindirela</i>             | 17                             | 0                             | 4-5                                                   |
| <i>Kifo Kisimani</i>         | 15                             | 0                             | *                                                     |

Contd.

|                                          |    |    |     |
|------------------------------------------|----|----|-----|
| <i>Lila na Fila</i>                      | 14 | 12 | 5-8 |
| <i>Sungura Kisimani</i>                  | 13 | 0  | 3   |
| <i>Visa na Mikasa</i>                    | 13 | 39 | 1-3 |
| <i>Jogoo na Kuku</i>                     | 13 | 0  | 4   |
| <i>Fisi na Simba</i>                     | 9  | 0  | 4-8 |
| <i>Kuu</i>                               | 8  | 0  | *   |
| <i>Kaka Sungura</i>                      | 8  | 0  | 4   |
| <i>Mtu na Mvua</i>                       | 6  | 0  | 7-8 |
| <i>Shamba la Wanyama</i>                 | 6  | 0  | *   |
| <i>Mtoto Mtukutu</i>                     | 6  | 0  | -   |
| <i>Asiyesikia la Mkuu Huvunjika Guu</i>  | 6  | 0  | 4-6 |
| <i>Mazishi ya Popo</i>                   | 6  | 0  | -   |
| <i>Ali Ababa</i>                         | 6  | 0  | 5-8 |
| <i>Mzee Mchoyo</i>                       | 5  | 0  | 6-8 |
| <i>Kwa nini Kanga ana Manyoya</i>        | 5  | 0  | 4-5 |
| <i>Siku za Mwizi ni Arobaini</i>         | 5  | 0  | 6-8 |
| <i>Hakimu mwenye Busara</i>              | 5  | 0  | 6-8 |
| <i>Fisi na Paka</i>                      | 5  | 0  | 3   |
| <i>Ndoto ya Riziki</i>                   | 5  | 0  | 5-6 |
| <i>Nyumba ya Sungura</i>                 | 5  | 0  | 5-6 |
| <i>Mtoto Mtukutu</i>                     | 5  | 0  | 5   |
| <i>Bi. Arusi Aliyetaka zawadi Maalum</i> | 5  | 0  | 6   |
| <i>Kisima cha Giningi</i>                | 5  | 0  | *   |
| <i>Mchagua Jembe si Mkulima</i>          | 5  | 0  | 4-5 |
| <i>Mke wa Mvuvi</i>                      | 5  | 0  | 5-6 |
| <i>Mfalme na Majitu</i>                  | 5  | 0  | 5-6 |
| <i>Kapotei na Lulu</i>                   | 5  | 0  | 0   |

\* The books have been recommended for high school students.

Table 5.53 shows some of the Kiswahili storybooks that the children selected as being the most preferred. *Sungura Mjanja* (2003) and *Kuku na Mwewe* (2001) were the most mentioned with 105 and 67 pupils from Nairobi and 52 and 48 from Lugare. These storybooks are recommended for class 2 and classes 1 to 3 pupils respectively. The results also reveal that pupils from Nairobi read a variety of stories from the list provided by the Ministry of Education. The findings also show that the pupils are not restricted to the

storybooks found in the list of approved books from the Ministry only. A number of pupils indicated that they have read storybooks recommended for students in high school.

*Sungura Mjanja* (2003) and *Kuku na Mwewe* (2001) which have been mentioned by most of the pupils are fables with animal characters. Reading through most of the other storybooks selected by the pupils, one finds that most of these stories cover real life incidents and issues that Kenyan pupils can identify with. Some of the themes covered in these stories deal with issues that affect children and youth, such as acceptance by friends, people with disabilities, peer pressure and its effects and other stories that interest children.

### 5.3.2.7 Interesting aspects in some of the preferred stories

In order to explore how the participants responded to the stories they preferred, they were asked to indicate what interested them in some of the stories that they had read. It should be noted that this was rather a general question. Their views are reported in table 5.54 below.

Table 5.54 Interesting aspects in some of the stories

| Interesting aspects             | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Adventures                      | 224     | 17  | 94     | 17  |
| Teachings in the storybooks.    | 187     | 14  | 59     | 11  |
| Fun                             | 141     | 11  | 60     | 11  |
| The trickster animals           | 106     | 8   | 74     | 14  |
| Language used in the stories    | 87      | 7   | 54     | 10  |
| Reasons to the causes of nature | 24      | 2   | 13     | 2   |
| Interesting names of characters | 15      | 1   | 10     | 2   |
| No response                     | 531     | 40  | 181    | 33  |
| Total                           | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

From the responses given, it can be concluded that some of the pupils categorized the stories into their preferred genre with 17% of pupils from Nairobi and 17% from Lugare saying they liked the adventures stories. Adventure stories place children at the centre of events (Grenby 2008: 171). In most cases the protagonists are unimportant in their normal

lives, some are neglected and often victims without parents or just because they are children (Grenby 2008: 171). In this kind of stories, children try to identify with the perseverance of the characters and reflect on how the characters overcome whatever difficulty they encounter.

The results also revealed that 8% of the pupils from Nairobi and 14% from Lugare reported that they liked the trickster animals in the stories. Trickster characters are common to several forms of the oral narrative and they are the most popular in African oral traditions. The hare for example is the trickster animal in most cultures in Africa. He or she is amoral, violent and self-serving (Harries & Cornell 1993: 107).

Other pupils gave their responses based on the thematic aspects of the stories. For instance, those who said that they liked the teachings found in the stories were 14% from Nairobi and 11% from Lugare. 2% from Nairobi and 2% from Lugare said that the stories revealed to them the cause and state of nature. These two groups were interested in gaining efferent information from the stories.

Finally, other pupils based their responses on the stylistic aspect of the stories they had read. This comprised of 7% of pupils from Nairobi and 10% from Lugare. They indicated that they were interested in the language used in the stories. The other group reported that they liked the characters in the stories they read. These comprised of 1% from Nairobi and 2% from Lugare. The rest of the pupils did not respond to the question.

#### **5.3.2.8 Discussing stories read with friends**

Discussing of stories read with friends is an important aspect of enhancing reading habits because it stimulates interest in reading. Pupils in this study were asked to say if they discussed storybooks with friends. Table 5.55 shows the number of pupils who discussed stories with their friends.



Table 5.55 Discussing stories read with friends

| Response    | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes         | 722     | 55  | 328    | 60  |
| No          | 147     | 11  | 64     | 12  |
| Sometimes   | 416     | 32  | 143    | 26  |
| No response | 30      | 2   | 10     | 2   |
| Total       | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.55 above shows that 55% of the pupils from Nairobi and 60% from Lugare talk about the stories they have read with their friends. 11% of pupils from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare indicated that they never talked with their friends about what they read, while 35% from Nairobi and 26% from Lugare said they sometimes discuss with their friends what they are reading.

Shared reading is a social activity that provides an interactive context for children to learn and practice their verbal and conceptual skills (Clark & Taylor 2005: 20). On the other hand discussing stories helps to encourage reluctant readers to start reading and therefore to also participate in the discussions with other pupils and thus will not feel left out. This is what Cullinun & Person (2003: 98) refer to as ‘co-operate learning’ in which pupils work collaboratively on specific projects or tasks. Through discussions the pupils learn to express themselves as they talk about what they have read to their friends. This makes a pupil feel that he or she shares a culture of reading with his or her friends. In addition, when readers share what they have gleaned from a text, they help others see dimensions of characters and plots that they might not have noticed alone (Hoewisch 2000:3). This also helps them to see and understand the value of certain themes, styles and illustrations in the text.

#### **5.3.2.9 Borrowing Kiswahili storybooks from friends**

In a related question the pupils were asked if they borrowed storybooks from friends. Table 5.56 reveals the findings.

Table 5.56 Borrowing storybooks from friends

| Response    | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes         | 1135    | 86  | 481    | 88  |
| No          | 159     | 12  | 59     | 11  |
| No response | 21      | 2   | 5      | 1   |
| Total       | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

The results in table 5.56 reveal that 86% of pupils from Nairobi and 88% from Lugare borrow storybooks from friends while 12% from Nairobi and 11% from Lugare do not borrow storybooks from friends.

The results show that friends play a great role in enhancing reading habits through exchanging storybooks with friends among these pupils. The sharing of enthusiasm among children over their storybooks can be a means of arousing interest in books and in particular reluctant readers can learn from this and be won over by other children in reading storybooks.

#### **5.3.2.10 Where, when and how they preferred reading during their leisure reading?**

The study sought to find out how pupils read. In this question, the study examined the circumstances under which pupils read by asking them to indicate the places they enjoyed reading from, the time and other ways of reading. In seeking answers to this question, the researcher would be able to tell whether there is any extra reading that takes place outside school. Tables 5.57, 5.58 and 5.59 indicate the preferred places, time and other ways of reading at home.

Table 5.57 preferred reading place at home

| Reading place | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Sitting room  | 690     | 52  | 405    | 74  |
| Bed room      | 545     | 41  | 42     | 8   |
| Under a tree  | 74      | 6   | 92     | 17  |
| No response   | 6       | 1   | 6      | 1   |
| Total         | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.57 indicates the preferred reading places in three areas at home: bedroom, sitting room and under a tree. The sitting room was the most frequently chosen reading space with 52% of pupils from Nairobi and 74% from Lugare. This is the only room in most homes with a chair and table and where most reading engagements take place in most families. This was followed by the bedroom with 41% of pupils from Nairobi and 8% from Lugare. Last preferred place was under a tree with 6% from Nairobi and 17% from Lugare.

Chapter four of this study (c.f. 4.1) has presented the kind of homes that most of these pupils come from. Many of the homes have houses with small rooms and are overcrowded. In Lugare, for example, most homes are poorly lit due to lack of electricity. It is not possible therefore for most families to have study rooms for their children. The bedroom as another of the preferred reading place is used because in most homes, family members will sit in the sitting room as they relax or watch television thus distracting pupils from reading.

#### **5.3.2.11 Preferred time of reading**

The pupils were asked to state their preferred time of reading. The results are revealed in table 5.58 below.

Table 5.58 Preferred time of reading

| Response      | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| After Lunch   | 651     | 50  | 225    | 41  |
| After supper  | 394     | 30  | 271    | 50  |
| Early morning | 122     | 9   | 33     | 6   |
| No response   | 148     | 11  | 16     | 3   |
| Total         | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

To the question about what time of day they read, the results show that the best time of reading for most pupils is after lunch. This comprises of 50% of pupils from Nairobi and 41% from Lugare. This is followed by after super with 30% of pupils from Nairobi and 50% pupils from Lugare. The rest of the pupils prefer reading in the morning with 9% from Nairobi and 6%. The rest of the pupils did not respond. Most pupils in Lugare can only find time to read after lunch while still in school, or after supper when most of them have finished engaging in other activities such as doing household chores, looking after their

siblings after school and after doing homework. The same thing applies to some pupils from Nairobi.

### **5.3.2.12 Do they read as they listen to music?**

Pupils were asked to show whether they also listen to music as they read their storybooks. The results are revealed in table 5.59 below.

Table 5.59 Do the pupils read as they listen to music?

| Response    | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes         | 173     | 13  | 37     | 7   |
| No          | 1123    | 85  | 504    | 92  |
| No response | 19      | 2   | 4      | 1   |
| Total       | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

In table 5.59 above, the results show that only 13% of the participants from Nairobi and 7% from Lugare listen to music as they read while the majority of the pupils, 85% from Nairobi and 92% from Lugare do not listen to music as they read.

For those few who read while listening to music, a scene is set for reading where the pupils create what is referred to as a poly aesthetic universe (Weinreich 2000: 10). This means that many desires are satisfied at once via certain senses: the visual and the auditory. However, as shown from the results, most pupils find reading and listening to music at the same time as weakening attention and comprehension and prefer not to engage in more than one activity as they read.

### **5.3.2.13 Ownership of Kiswahili storybook reading diary**

Children's storybook diaries are an indicator for measuring amount and breadth of reading (Wigfield & Guthrie 1997: 429). Wigfield and Guthrie (ibid) note that the use of storybook diaries can reveal the exposure that children have had on reading. Having a diary can be another way of evaluating the growth of a child in literary terms (Huck 1979: 750). At the same time it helps a teacher or other people responsible for monitoring the literary growth of a child determine the pupils' exposure to books. In this regard the study sought to find out whether pupils have reading diaries. Table 5.60 reveals the findings.

Table 5.60 Ownership of Kiswahili storybook reading diary

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 389     | 30  | 113    | 21  |
| No        | 926     | 70  | 432    | 79  |
| Total     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

The results in table 5.60 reveal that only 30% of pupils from Nairobi and 21% from Lugare who participated in the study had Kiswahili storybook reading diaries. The majority who comprised of 70% from Nairobi and 79% from Lugare did not have reading diaries. The findings reveal that pupils do not take stock of the storybooks that they read. Encouraging use of storybook diaries helps the pupil to keep their record of the storybooks read. The pupils can use the diaries to note down particulars of the books they read such as: the title of the book or story, the author, the illustrator, the key characters and lessons learnt from the book. The information can then be used during discussion time in class. However, Wigfield & Guthrie (1997: 265) suggest that the diary technique requires extensive cooperation from pupils, teachers and even parents. This is so because responses can be distorted because of the tendencies toward reporting desirable behaviours.

#### 5.3.2.14 Kiswahili teachers' interest in pupils' reading of storybooks

Teachers play a big role in familiarizing pupils with the world of reading through the storybooks they suggest to their pupils (Galaktionova 2005: 371). This is also one of the ways of developing reading culture among school children. Pupils were asked to state their teachers' involvement in developing a culture of reading by way of suggesting Kiswahili storybooks to them. Table 5.61 reveals the findings.

Table 5.61 Kiswahili teachers' interest in pupils' reading of storybooks

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 603     | 46  | 321    | 59  |
| No        | 712     | 54  | 224    | 41  |
| Total     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

As shown in table 5.61 above, 46% of the pupils from Nairobi and 59% from Lugare reported that their Kiswahili teachers recommended to them Kiswahili storybooks to read.

54% of pupils from Nairobi and 41% from Lugare reported that their Kiswahili teachers did not recommend to them Kiswahili storybooks for reading.

The findings reveal that some teachers don't show interest in enhancing reading habits in pupils as reported by the pupils themselves. Valtin (2005: 30) sees the teacher-pupil support as an important factor of success and well being in school. The feeling of the pupils that teachers encourage and support their learning makes them want to read more. This will in the end help in achieving the goal of encouraging pupils to read independently.

### **5.3.2.15 Proximity of public library and its use**

The importance of public libraries in developing children's reading skills in any society cannot be underscored. Libraries encourage children to have a love for books, to have a love for literature and to want to read and practice their reading skills (Magara 2005: 2). Another objective of this study was to obtain information from the participants about accessibility of Kiswahili storybooks from public libraries by asking them to state the proximity of the public libraries to their homes, whether they use the libraries and how often they visit the public library. Table 5.62 reveals the findings on the proximity of public libraries while tables 5.63, 5.64, 5.65 and 5.66 indicate its use for those who live in close proximity to the libraries, how often they visit the library, the purpose of their visits to the public library and lastly if they borrow storybooks from the public library.

Table 5.62 Proximity to the public library

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 527     | 40  | 46     | 8   |
| No        | 788     | 60  | 499    | 92  |
| Total     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.62 above shows that 40% of the pupils from Nairobi and 8% from Lugare live in close proximity to public libraries. The majority of the pupils comprising of 60% from Nairobi and 92% from Lugare live far from the public libraries. The results reveal that most Kenyan pupils do not have access to public libraries.

Public library network in Kenya was established in 1965 under the name Kenya National library services (KNLS). The first library opened its doors to the public in 1969. By 2003

Kenya National Library services ran seven provincial libraries, nine district libraries and 17 community libraries in all eight provinces of the country (Kenya National Library Services 2005). It also initiated other programs to promote reading habits among the citizens. These included: travelling mobile truck services, a school book-box programme in Karatina, Mwingi and Silibwet libraries, Donkey library service in Nyilima, Bondo District and Camel library in the North Eastern part of the country. It can be deduced from the results that the development and spread of the Kenya National Library Services has been slow and therefore unable to cover most part of the country.

### 5.3.2.16 Public library usage

Similarly the study sought to find out from pupils who lived in close proximity to the public libraries about their use of the public libraries. Table 5.63 reveals the findings.

Table 5.63 Public library usage

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 190     | 36  | 31     | 67  |
| No        | 337     | 64  | 15     | 33  |
| Total     | 527     | 100 | 46     | 100 |

Table 5.63 provides more information on the use of public libraries by pupils in the study. The results show that 36% of the pupils from Nairobi and 67% from Lugare visit the public library and 64% from Nairobi and 33% from Lugare do not use the public library.

One reason why children who are in close proximity to the library do not go to the library could be related to lack of general knowledge on the part of the children that one can go to the public library to read and look for information. Children need to be guided in their reading. In most cases the general attitude of the public towards the library use can be said to impact on children. If adults do not show interest in public libraries, this attitude will trickle down to the children. Children need the support and encouragement from parents to go to the library, since they cannot go there by themselves.

### 5.3.2.17 Frequency of public library use

The pupils were also asked to indicate how often they visited the public library. Table 5.64 shows how often the pupils visit the public library.

Table 5.64 Frequency of public library use

| Use of Library         | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| During school holidays | 122     | 64  | 23     | 74  |
| Once a month           | 40      | 21  | 2      | 7   |
| Once a week            | 15      | 8   | 1      | 3   |
| Less than a month      | 13      | 7   | 5      | 16  |
| Total                  | 190     | 100 | 31     | 100 |

Table 5.64 shows that 64% of the pupils from Nairobi and 74% from Lugare use the library during school holidays. 21% of pupils from Nairobi and 7% from Lugare visit the library once a month. Those who go to the public library once a week comprise of 8% from Nairobi and 3% from Lugare and those who indicated that they go to the public library less than a month were 7% from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare.

### 5.3.2.18 Purpose of public library visits

The participants were also asked to indicate the kind of materials that they read when they visit the public libraries. Table 5.65 reveals the purposes of public library usage.

Table 5.65 Purpose of public library visits.

| Reading material | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Storybooks       | 115     | 61  | 25     | 81  |
| Textbooks        | 15      | 8   | 3      | 10  |
| Newspapers       | 25      | 13  | 1      | 3   |
| Magazines        | 25      | 13  | 1      | 3   |
| Other            | 10      | 5   | 1      | 3   |
| Total            | 190     | 100 | 31     | 100 |

In table 5.65 above the findings indicate that pupils usually use the public library for the main purpose of reading storybooks. This is reported by 61% of pupils from Nairobi and



81% from Lugare. 8% of the pupils from Nairobi and 10% from Lugare read textbooks when they go to the public library. 13% of pupils from Nairobi and 3% from Lugare go to the public library to read newspapers. Those who go to read magazines comprise of 13% from Nairobi and 3% from Lugare. The rest of the pupils, 5% from Nairobi and only 3 % from Lugare go to the library to read other materials which include reading for examinations and doing homework.

#### **5.3.2.19 borrowing of Kiswahili storybooks from the public library**

The participants were further asked to say whether they borrow Kiswahili storybooks from the public library. Table 5.66 reveals the findings.

Table 5.66 Borrowing of Kiswahili storybooks from the public library

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 40      | 21  | 10     | 32  |
| No        | 150     | 79  | 21     | 68  |
| Total     | 190     | 100 | 31     | 100 |

In the above table, 21% of the pupils from Nairobi and 32% from Lugare who go to the library indicated that they do borrow storybooks from the public library, while the rest of the pupils do not borrow Kiswahili storybooks from the library. In order to enhance reading habits, pupils who can access the public library should be encouraged by the library staff to borrow storybooks from the library.

#### **5.3.2.20. Book exhibition attendance**

Book exhibitions or book fairs in Kenya are organized by the Kenya Publishers Association (KPA) every year in Nairobi since 1998 under the present name, the Nairobi International Book Fair (NIBF). The book fairs attract visitors who get to sample books and other products from publishers, printers and booksellers (Kyunguti 2007: 12). These visitors include school children, scholars, the general public and the media. The book fairs have been an arena for promotion of the general books and also children's literature in Kenya. Other than the book fairs held in Nairobi, regional book fairs are now being organized by the Kenya National Library Services and the East African Book Development Association (EABD) to supplement and complement the Nairobi International Book Fair (Sarjant 2005,

Ngumo 2005). According to Sarjant, reading tents takes books out of the classroom or library environment and into a more relaxed and informal setting where a wide range of enjoyable activities can take place. Apart from the reading tents, other types of mobile libraries that have been used in Kenya include: motor vehicle, bicycles, donkey and camel mobile libraries (Makenzi 2004: 1). The reading tents are carried out with the aim of introducing children to libraries at an early age. It also aims at creating awareness on the importance of reading for leisure and not necessarily to pass examinations.

The Nairobi International Book Fair involves children by not only having reading spaces spared for them, but also allowing children to write their own stories, tell their own stories, dramatize and draw (See Appendix 6). This is done with the main aim of inculcating a reading culture among the pupils by popularizing reading, developing the literary interests of pupils of different age groups, promoting improvement of pupil's reading skills and lastly, providing pupils with the possibility of reading the latest literature meant for children (Kyunguti 2007: 12, Sarjant 2005: 4).

Indeed promotion of reading by various stake holders interested in children can develop pupils' reading habits for both recreational and educational reading. Such book exhibitions are also intended to make children aware of books on other various subjects. It is in this regard that the study sought to find out the participation of pupils in these events. Pupils were asked to state if at all they have ever participated in any book exhibition event. Table 5.67 reveals the results.

Table 5.67 Attendance of book exhibition

| Responses                               | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes                                     | 263     | 20  | 34     | 6   |
| No                                      | 640     | 49  | 279    | 51  |
| I do not know what a book exhibition is | 412     | 31  | 232    | 43  |
| Total                                   | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.67 reveals that only 20% of pupils from Nairobi and 6% from Lugare have attended a book exhibition. 49% of pupils from Nairobi and 51% from Lugare indicated that they have not attended any book exhibition, while 31% from Nairobi and 43% from Lugare reported that they had no idea what a book exhibition is.

A study carried out by Clark & Forster in 2005 in England showed that children in primary schools were generally more enthusiastic about reading promotion activities. In particular the pupils stated that reading groups with friends, talking about their favourite books, reading games, reading for competition and meeting authors would make them want to read more (Clark & Forster 2005: 58). In order for pupils to be made aware of book exhibitions and their roles, schools through the support of district education offices and publishers should make specific efforts to organize large campaigns for books for children so as to create awareness about storybooks and the need to read for leisure.

### **5.3.2.21 Ownership of Kiswahili storybooks at home**

Studies show that there is a significant relationship between enhancing reading habits and availability of reading materials at home (Abeyratha & Zainab 2004: 116). Children need to be exposed to a variety of literature at home as well as at school. Children who have more children's books tend to have more positive reading behaviours and attitudes. The books that parents buy for the children to read while at home can be regarded as a reading resource. Studies show that in most countries of the world, the availability of books for children to read is highly conducive to better reading achievements (Tella & Akandi 2007: 23, Elley 1998). In this regard, pupils were asked to report on whether they are bought Kiswahili storybooks by their parents. Table 5.68 reveals the results regarding ownership of Kiswahili storybooks at home.

Table 5.68 Ownership of Kiswahili storybooks at home

| Responses                              | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes                                    | 876     | 67  | 286    | 53  |
| No                                     | 279     | 21  | 225    | 41  |
| They buy storybooks written in English | 160     | 12  | 34     | 6   |
| Total                                  | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.68 reveals that 67% of pupils from Nairobi and 53% from Lugare interviewed stated that their parents bought Kiswahili storybooks for them. 21% of the pupils from Nairobi and 41% from Lugare reported that their parents did not buy Kiswahili storybooks for them. Some pupils indicated that their parents bought them storybooks written in English only. The percentage of this category was 12% from Nairobi and 6% from Lugare. This may imply that these parents do not value reading in Kiswahili thus denying pupils the

opportunity to read in Kiswahili while at home. Reasons for parents not buying storybooks for their children could be related to poverty where most people cannot afford to buy storybooks for their children. It could also be due to the fact that some parents are not aware of the important role storybooks play in human development. However, the figures are an indication that parents would like their children to read at home thus an indication of the literary practices at home and an ingredient in making readers from children.

### 5.3.2.22 Parents' reading habits

As parents are the child's first teacher, they serve as role models for their children and this equally applies to interest in reading either for knowledge or for pleasure (Abeyrathna & Zainab 2004: 112). The respondents in this study were to indicate whether their parents read storybooks at home. Table 5.69 below shows the results.

Table 5.69 Parents' reading habits at home

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 410     | 31  | 180    | 33  |
| No        | 905     | 69  | 365    | 67  |
| Total     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.69 indicates that 31% of pupils from Nairobi and 33% from Lugare have parents who read storybooks at home while 69% of pupils from Nairobi and 67% from Lugare reported that their parents do not read storybooks at home.

The results reveal that a number of pupils in this study have parents who do not read for leisure. Although parents' own reading behaviour may not necessary reflect the extent to which they actually engage with their children in various literacy activities to foster children's reading habits, the fact that they act as role models is very important in fostering reading habits in their children. Positive parental attitudes towards reading, enhances children's positive reading behaviours and attitudes. The actual involvement for parents with children in enhancing reading habits will be dealt with in the section on parents' responses (see 5. 4).

### 5.3.2.23 Siblings' reading habits

Brothers and sisters have a profound effect on the education of each other. In many families, older children have substantial roles in the raising and training of their younger siblings. They can act as models and sources of evaluation for younger children (Hughes 1989: 52). Other than parents acting as reading role models in the family, siblings who read can also contribute to enhancing reading habits in their younger siblings. The pupils in this study were asked to report on the reading habits of their brothers and sisters at home. Table 5.70 reveals the findings.

Table 5.70 Siblings' reading habits

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 780     | 59  | 280    | 51  |
| No        | 535     | 41  | 265    | 49  |
| Total     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.70 indicates that 59% of the pupils from Nairobi and 51% from Lugare have siblings who read storybooks at home. 41% of pupils from Nairobi and 49% reported that their elder siblings do not read storybooks at home.

This implies that most siblings are not good literary models for most pupils who participated in this study. When children see their siblings engaged in reading, they also get interested in reading and are more likely to view it as enjoyable.

### 5.3.2.24 Reading of newspapers or magazines

In discussing reading habits among children, one cannot ignore newspapers and magazines as alternative forms of literature that enhance reading habits. The newspaper is considered as a tool for encouraging and developing reading, thinking and learning skills (Babalola 2002: 403). Newspapers can be used by pupils to get up to date information in other curriculum subjects such as Social Studies and Science.

In order to ascertain the degree of exposure to any other reading materials in the pupil's life, the participants in this study were asked to report on whether they read newspapers or magazines while at home and at the same time indicate their favourite newspaper and

magazines. Table 5.71 and 5.72 show the pupils' responses in relation to whether they read newspapers at home and their preferred newspapers.

Table 5.71 Reading of newspapers and magazines

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 916     | 70  | 309    | 57  |
| No        | 399     | 30  | 236    | 43  |
| Total     | 1315    | 100 | 545    | 100 |

Table 5.71 above reports on the respondent's answer as to whether they read newspapers or magazines at home. The responses reveal that those pupils that read newspapers or magazines were 70% from Nairobi and 57% from Lugare. 30% of pupils from Nairobi and 43 % from Lugare reported that they do not read either newspapers or magazines.

The results reveal that a number of pupils are able to access newspapers and therefore the majority of pupils engage themselves in reading these newspapers. Indeed in Kenya, *Daily Nation* newspaper devotes reviewing space just for children's storybooks every Sunday. This goes ahead to inform children of the current publications in the market. In addition more space is set aside for various articles targeting children. Table 5.72 reveals the preferred newspaper and or magazines read by children.

Table 5.72 Preferred newspaper or magazines

| Type of Newspaper      | Nairobi | %  | Lugare | %  |
|------------------------|---------|----|--------|----|
| <i>Sunday Nation</i>   | 429     | 33 | 96     | 18 |
| <i>Daily Nation</i>    | 282     | 21 | 84     | 15 |
| <i>Taifa Leo</i>       | 50      | 3  | 60     | 11 |
| <i>Taifa Jumapili</i>  | 0       | 0  | 26     | 5  |
| <i>Sunday Standard</i> | 62      | 5  | 28     | 5  |
| <i>Standard</i>        | 60      | 5  | 0      | 0  |
| <i>Sparkle</i>         | 15      | 1  | 0      | 0  |
| <i>Maneno</i>          | 10      | 1  | 0      | 0  |
| <i>Sara</i>            | 8       | 1  | 0      | 0  |

Contd.

|                    |      |     |     |     |
|--------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| <i>Non readers</i> | 399  | 30  | 251 | 46  |
| Total              | 1315 | 100 | 545 | 100 |

In table 5.72 above the proportions of favourite newspapers for the respondents were: Sunday Nation: 33% of pupils from Nairobi and 18% from Lugare, Daily Nation had 21% of pupils from Nairobi and 15% from Lugare. The Standard was read by 5% of pupils from Nairobi only while, The Sunday Standard was read by 5% of pupils from Nairobi and 5% from Lugare. The only Kiswahili newspapers, Taifa Leo and Taifa Jumapili were read by 3% from Nairobi and 11% from Lugare, while Taifa Jumapili was read by 5% of pupils from Lugare only. Also the children's magazines such as Maneno, Sparkle and Sara are not very popular with the pupils. The reason could be that the magazines are not accessible to most pupils at home. For instance, to access Sparkle, one has to be a subscriber to the magazine which is printed quarterly in Kenya.

The Sunday Nation which is published every Sunday is popular with children because within it is a free magazine for children. It contains a wide variety of different materials: comic stripes, stories, news, science, history, book reviews, games, mazes, puzzles, jokes and many more. A large amount of space is also given to interactive features such as letters, readers' photos, art competitions, pen pals and birthday messages. All these attract children of various ages to reading the newspaper because it caters for the various needs of the children. When children are given the opportunity to get involved in newspapers, this action makes them to realize that newspapers are not meant for adults only. More ever there is need for the Daily Nation's sister paper, Taifa Leo to offer the same activities in Kiswahili so that the pupils can balance their reading for leisure in the two official languages.

#### **5.4 Findings from parents' responses to questionnaire items**

The reading habits of children can only be adequately addressed in the context of the society's reading culture (Osazee 2004: 10) and thus the family. Culture has been seen as a way of life that is learned and shared and capable of being transmitted from one generation to the other (Baja 1991: 19). In the case of forming reading habits among children, the habit has to be taught and learnt. It is within the family that values are handed down from

one generation to the next (National Centre for Family 2001 quoted in Kanyane 2004: 42). Reading habits in the home, like other cultural practices can be said to socialize children into forming habits of reading outside the school environment. In this case therefore, the home becomes another environment where reading habits can be developed and cultivated.

The family is where literacy begins and where the foundations of literacy are learned (Adele & Skage 1998: 12). Children who grow up in a family where reading and books are valued develop an attachment to books and learning (Kanyane 2004: 42). On the other hand, children who grow up in a family where parents place little value and focus on reading do not develop reading habits at an early age. Such children might end up being non readers.

The family and in particular, parents are the pillars of family literacy (Magara 2005: 6). Parents are the children's first and most important teachers and are therefore qualified to pass on the richness of literacy to their children (Kanyane 2004: 42). This can be done through reading, playing together, telling stories, dancing, singing together and having book discussions together.

It is in view of this that the study set out to investigate the extent to which parents in Nairobi and Lugare were involved in the reading habits of their children who are in primary schools. Among the issues that the study sought to investigate was the provision of a literary rich home through buying of storybooks, parents' attitude towards children engaging in reading and parents as literary reading models.

The parents' questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section one of the questionnaire sought to find out the parents' demographic information which included: the parents' geographic areas, level of education and the social economic status of parents, and the type of school attended by their children.

Section two of the questionnaire was based on the literary practices of the parents and the children at home. The questionnaire sought to elicit information on; a) provision of reading materials such as storybooks and newspapers; b) the involvement of parents in the reading of stories by their children, parents' perception towards their children's reading and how they support and encourage children to read; c) The views of parents on *Sheng* as a code spoken by the children, language use at home and finally, d) the attitudes of parents



towards the integration of children's literature into Kiswahili language lessons were also sought. The results of the findings are presented below.

### **5.4.1 Section A: Parents' demographic information**

This section provides findings on the parents' demographic information.

#### **5.4.1.1 The study population**

A total number of one hundred and thirty three (133) parents were interviewed using both structured and unstructured questionnaire in order to provide information on the actual literary practices at home. This constituted 93% of the parents sampled for the study. 62% of the parents were selected from Nairobi, while 38% of the parents were selected from Lugare district. Table 5.73 below shows the number of parents who participated in the study according to the selected districts.

Table 5.73 Parents' participation according to district

| District | Frequency | %   |
|----------|-----------|-----|
| Nairobi  | 82        | 62  |
| Lugare   | 51        | 38  |
| Total    | 133       | 100 |

In Table 5.73 above 62% of the parents who participated in the study were selected from Nairobi district while 38% were selected from Lugare district in Western Province.

#### **5.4.1.2 Education level of parents and guardians**

In order to gauge the literacy level of parents and guardians, parents and guardians were asked to report on the level of their education. Parental education indicates the higher level of educational attainment of parents and guardians' education. Five levels of educational attainment were distinguished: primary, secondary, middle college, university and no formal education. Table 5.74 indicates the various educational levels of parents who participated in the study.

Table 5.74 Level of education of parents

| Level of Education  | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Primary             | 13      | 16  | 5      | 10  |
| Secondary           | 31      | 38  | 12     | 23  |
| Middle college      | 27      | 33  | 32     | 63  |
| University          | 8       | 10  | 2      | 4   |
| No formal education | 3       | 3   | 0      | 0   |
| Total               | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

Table 5.74 above shows that 16% of parents from Nairobi and 10% from Lugare indicated that they attained primary level of education. Those parents with secondary education were the majority in Nairobi and comprised of 38% while in Lugare they comprised of 23%. 33% of parents from Nairobi and 63% from Lugare have middle level training. 10% of parents from Nairobi and 4% from Lugare indicated that they have university education. 3% of parents from Nairobi indicated that they have no formal education. It is clear from the table that the majority of parents have formal education. This means that they should have no problem engaging in reading activities with their children.

#### 5.4.1.3. Occupation of parents

Parents were asked to indicate their occupations. The occupation was categorized into skilled workers, business people, unskilled workers and farmers. Knowing the different occupation engaged in by parents is important because it reflects on the income level which has an impact on the development of reading habits at home (Pawlitzy 2005: 158). The occupation of parents in the study is presented in table 5.75 below.

Table 5.75 Occupation of parents

| Occupation          | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Skilled workers     | 38      | 46  | 17     | 33  |
| Business            | 32      | 39  | 7      | 14  |
| Unskilled workers   | 10      | 12  | 6      | 12  |
| Small scale farmers | 2       | 3   | 21     | 41  |
| Total               | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

In Nairobi, the majority of parents who participated in the study are skilled workers and comprised of 46%, 39% were in business, 12% were working as unskilled workers while 3% were small scale farmers. In Lugare the majority of parents were small scale farmers with 41%. According to the Republic of Kenya (2001) and Pawlitzky (2005) this sector provides the lowest earnings estimated at around Ksh.17, 000 per annum or Ksh.1400 per month. This was followed by 33% of parents who were skilled workers. 14% were in business while 12% were unskilled workers. Those in unskilled and skilled occupation have an in income level ranging from Ksh.1500 per month to above Ksh.30, 000 per month (Pawlitzky 2005: 46).

#### **5.4.1.4 Type of school attended by their children**

The parents were asked to indicate the type of school attended by their children. Table 5.76 shows the results.

Table 5.76 Type of school attended by children

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Public    | 58      | 71  | 33     | 65  |
| Private   | 24      | 29  | 18     | 35  |
| Total     | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

The results show that 71% of parents from Nairobi had children attending public schools while 29% had children attending private schools. In Lugare, those parents with children attending public schools were 65% while those attending private schools were 35%.

#### **5.4.2 Section B: Literary practices at home**

This section presents findings on the literary practices of parents with their children at home. The questionnaire for this section was designed to elicit responses from parents in relation to the following areas: availing storybooks to their children through buying and borrowing, parents' views on the value of reading done by their children, their involvement in their children's reading, parents' reading habits, availability of reading resources in their community, language use at home, parents' views on *Sheng* and finally, parents' views on the new Kiswahili integrated syllabus.

#### **5.4.2.1 Parents buying storybooks for their children**

Regarding reading at home and the provision of storybooks, parents were asked to indicate if they bought storybooks for their children or they borrowed storybooks from friends or from the library on behalf of their children. Table 5.77 shows how parents encourage reading through the provision of storybooks.

Table 5.77 Parents buying storybooks for their children

| Response | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes      | 54      | 66  | 28     | 55  |
| No       | 28      | 34  | 23     | 45  |
| Total    | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

The results show that most parents buy storybooks for their children. This is revealed by 66% of parents from Nairobi and 55% from Lugare. Only 34% of parents from Nairobi and 45% from Lugare indicated that they did not buy storybooks for their children. This shows that indeed some homes have storybooks for the children while in other homes parents do not have the capacity to buy the storybooks due to economic constraints in the family. The prices of children's books range from Ksh.80 to Ksh.200 (Ministry of Education 2007). On the other hand, this could also be attributed to lack of interest in some parents regarding buying of storybooks for their children. Further some parents feel that since the government is funding the primary education by buying reading materials then there is no need of buying storybooks for their children. Availing storybooks at home is one of the ways of facilitating reading for pleasure. In addition, when children see parents buying storybooks for them, it encourages them to see that storybooks have an important role in the household.

#### **5.4.2.2 Parents borrowing storybooks on behalf of their children**

In addition, parents were asked to indicate if at all they borrow storybooks from their colleagues or friends or public library on behalf of their children. Table 5.78 below shows the findings.

Table 5.78 Parents borrowing storybooks on behalf of their children

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 18      | 22  | 8      | 16  |
| No        | 64      | 78  | 43     | 84  |
| Total     | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

The table above indicates that borrowing storybooks on behalf of their children is not so common with many parents. Only 22% of parents from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare borrow storybooks for their children. The rest of the parents do not borrow storybooks on behalf of their children. This means that parents have not explored this alternative ways of accessing storybooks to their children.

#### 5.4.2.3 Reasons as to why children should read.

Parents were asked to indicate why they think reading was good for their children. Table 5.79 reveals the results.

Table 5.79 Reasons for children reading storybooks

| Reasons for reading             | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Helps in language development   | 54      | 66  | 42     | 82  |
| Improves creativity             | 12      | 15  | 1      | 2   |
| Cultivates their reading habits | 10      | 12  | 8      | 16  |
| Helps to keep them busy         | 6       | 7   | 0      | 0   |
| Total                           | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

In this study, majority of parents believed that reading of storybooks can help enhance the language of the pupils. This response comprised of 66% of parents from Nairobi and 82% from Lugare. 15% of parents from Nairobi and 2% from Lugare indicated that reading improves creativity in children. Those parents who said that reading helps in cultivating reading habits among children comprised of 12% from Nairobi and 16% from Lugare.

Views given by parents on benefits of reading are similar with the views of the head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and pupils. Only Parents from Nairobi indicated that reading helps to keep the children busy. This may imply that parents in Nairobi are using

storybooks to prevent children from engaging in activities that are anti-social. Therefore, the parents resort to storybooks in order to help children develop a steady and constructive mind.

#### **5.4.2.4 Involvement of parents in the reading of their children**

When family members read certain books to their children repeatedly and respond to their questions in relation to their reading, children conclude that print is meaningful (Pasquarette 2006: 3). This study sought to find out whether parents are directly involved in the reading habits of their children. The parents of the children in the study were therefore asked to indicate if at all they read storybooks that their children read and secondly whether they read for their children. Table 5.80 and 5.81 show the results.

Table 5.80 Parents' reading children's storybooks

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 53      | 65  | 15     | 29  |
| No        | 29      | 35  | 36     | 71  |
| Total     | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

Table 5.80 indicates that 65% of parents from Nairobi and 29% from Lugare read storybooks that their children read. 35% of parents from Nairobi and 71% from Lugare indicated that they do not read storybooks that their children read. It seems some parents do not consider reading storybooks that their children read as being relevant and as a way of modelling appropriate behaviour in reading. Getting involved with what children are reading helps children to see that the parents are interested in storybooks. Reading stories written for children can help create a scene where parents can discuss the characters and themes that emerge from the stories with their children.

#### **5.4.2.5 Parents reading for children**

Further, parents were asked to show whether they read stories to their children. Table 5.81 reveals the findings.

Table 5.81 Parents reading for children

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 53      | 65  | 10     | 20  |
| I used to | 16      | 19  | 15     | 29  |
| No        | 13      | 16  | 26     | 51  |
| Total     | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

From the above table, 65% of parents from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare read stories for their children. 19% of parents from Nairobi and 29% from Lugare indicated that they used to read for their children but stopped. Parents, who did not read for their children comprised of 16% from Nairobi and 51% from Lugare.

The findings reveal that most parents especially from Lugare do not spend time reading for their children. Such a situation could be attributed to the fact that most parents do not have enough time with their children since most of the time they are engaged in farming activities, business, office work and other types of activities. Most of the parents who used to read for their children and later on stopped reported that their children could now read on their own and therefore the children no longer needed the assistance of their parents. Research has shown that children who are read to from an early age develop into better readers and valued reading more than those who had not been read to and they are expected to continue reading throughout their lives (Hoewish 2000: 1).

One thing to note about parents and children from Nairobi is that primary schools in Nairobi give daily homework to the pupils in different subjects and as a requirement, parents are supposed to guide their children in doing the homework. Therefore it could also be that what some parents consider as reading together includes working together on homework.

Parents who read for their children gave various reasons for doing so. Some of the reasons included; helping the child in proper pronunciations, encouraging the children by being there and helping the children acquire listening skills. The results therefore reveal that the majority of parents from Nairobi recognize the need to read with and to their children.

#### **5.4.2.6 Children's interest in reading**

Parents were asked to say whether their children liked reading. Table 5.82 reports the results.

Table 5.82 Children's interest in reading

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 72      | 88  | 42     | 82  |
| No        | 10      | 12  | 9      | 18  |
| Total     | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

In the above table, the results from most parents reveal that their children loved reading. This was represented by 88% of parents from Nairobi and 82% from Lugare. Only 12% of parents from Nairobi and 18% from Lugare reported that their children did not like reading.

#### **5.4.2.7 Reading of newspapers**

Reading the newspaper is among the most common and perhaps most important literacy events in which adults engage in (Duke & Bennet-Armistead 2004: 1). The study sought to find out about parents' interest in reading by showing whether they read newspapers and the type of newspapers that they read. This was so as to find out what other resources parents use when it comes to cultivating and enhancing reading habits at home. This is also in line with Elley's (1996: 46) observation that more newspapers are a sign of the community's wish to keep abreast of the world's events by means of reading. It is also a reflection of societal pressure to read. Table 5.83 shows parents who read and the type of newspapers that they read.



Table 5 83 Types of newspapers read by parents

| Type of Newspaper      | Nairobi | %  | Lugare | %  |
|------------------------|---------|----|--------|----|
| Daily Nation           | 57      | 70 | 15     | 29 |
| Sunday Nation          | 65      | 79 | 22     | 43 |
| Standard               | 19      | 23 | 11     | 22 |
| Sunday Standard        | 6       | 7  | 4      | 8  |
| Taifa Leo              | 13      | 16 | 10     | 20 |
| Taifa Jumapili         | 0       | 0  | 0      | 0  |
| I don't buy newspapers | 17      | 21 | 4      | 8  |

The results show that most parents were engaged in reading of the various types of newspaper published in Kenya. Only 21% of parents from Nairobi and 8% from Lugare indicated that they did not either read newspapers. This means that their children missed on reading the newspaper and thus missed on getting information on current news or children's magazines found in the newspapers. Availing newspapers at home can act as motivation for children to read. It can also be used to encourage the non-readers to start reading. Having newspapers at home creates opportunities for parents to get involved in the reading of their children. Thus they use newspapers as a strategy to access reading material for the family (Pawlitzy 2005: 146).

Regarding newspapers written in Kiswahili, it was revealed that only 10% of parents from Nairobi and 20% from Lugare buy and read them. This may be attributed to the negative attitudes towards Kiswahili that is reflected in the country. For instance Onyango (2003: 60) observes that in the print media, few people in Kenya read Kiswahili newspapers. This could also be due to the fact that most people perceive their ability to read in Kiswahili as less fluent (Pawlitzy 2005: 165) however Kiswahili has made a lot of impact on the radio stations in Kenya.

#### **5.4.2.8 Proximity to the public library**

Parents were asked to indicate the proximity of a public library to their homes. Table 5.84 indicates the findings.

Table 5.84 Proximity to the public library

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 21      | 26  | 3      | 6   |
| No        | 61      | 74  | 48     | 94  |
| Total     | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

The results reveal that few parents had libraries located near their homes. This is revealed by only 26% parents from Nairobi and 6% from Lugare who indicated that their homes are located near a public library. The rest of the parents indicated that their homes were not near public libraries. This means that parents have no access to public libraries and so cannot borrow storybooks on behalf of their children or encourage their children to visit the public libraries.

#### 5.4.2.9 How children spend their free time at home

Parents were asked to report on how their children spend their free time while at home. Table 5.85 reveals the results.

Table 5.85 How do children spend their time at home?

| Responses         | Nairobi | %  | Lugare | %  |
|-------------------|---------|----|--------|----|
| Do homework       | 75      | 94 | 44     | 86 |
| Help in housework | 62      | 76 | 42     | 82 |
| Watch television  | 60      | 73 | 8      | 16 |
| Play with friends | 55      | 67 | 21     | 41 |
| Chat with friends | 35      | 43 | 20     | 39 |
| Help on the farm  | 0       | 0  | 30     | 59 |

The results show that children engage in a variety of activities while at home. Most parents reported that most children spend their time doing homework. This comprised of 94% of parents from Nairobi and 86% from Lugare. Other activities performed by children as reported by parents included helping in housework, 76% from Nairobi and 82% from Lugare. 59% of parents from Lugare indicated that their children helped on the farm. Parents also indicated that their children engaged in other leisure activities such as

watching television, 73% from Nairobi, 16% from Lugare; chatting with friends 43% from Nairobi, 39% from Lugare and finally playing with friends, 67% from Nairobi, and 42% from Lugare.

The findings reveal that most parents from Nairobi had children who engaged in watching television compared to those in Lugare. This could be attributed to the fact that most homes in Nairobi have television sets. A number of studies have shown that watching television has contributed enormously to the decline of reading habits among youngsters (Arici 2008: 1, Mbae 2004). Watching television is considered as easier, requires less energy and less effort and therefore it is less demanding (Mbae 2004).

On the other hand the study reveals that children engage in social activities with their friends. Such moments can be used by parents to encourage their children to also talk about what they are reading in a more relaxed way.

#### **5.4.2.10 Language(s) most frequently used at home by the children**

The language(s) spoken at home and how they are used are important factors in reading literacy (Tella & Akande 2007: 120). Parents were asked to report on the language(s) used at home by the children. This was in order to gauge the promotion of the oral aspect of the various languages spoken in the home. Table 5.86 indicates the language(s) used at home by parents who participated in the study.

Table 5.86 Language(s) most frequently used at home by the children.

| Languages           | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|---------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Kiswahili           | 30      | 37  | 10     | 20  |
| English             | 12      | 15  | 5      | 10  |
| Kiswahili / English | 20      | 24  | 8      | 15  |
| Mother tongue       | 10      | 12  | 23     | 45  |
| <i>Sheng</i>        | 10      | 12  | 5      | 10  |
| Total               | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

The study reveals that in Nairobi, Kiswahili is the language most used at home. This comprised of 37% of parents. This implies that there is some kind of promotion of Kiswahili language in a number of homes. This is followed by 24% of parents who

reported the use of both Kiswahili and English at home. This means that most homes engage in bilingual communication in Nairobi. 15% of parents indicated that the children used English most of the time. 12% indicated that they used the mother tongue while another 12% said the children used *Sheng* at home most of the time.

In Lugare, 45% of the parents indicated that the most frequently used language by the children was the mother tongue. This was followed by 20% of parents who reported that the children used Kiswahili. 15% used English and Kiswahili. 10% of the parents reported that their children used English while another 10% said the children used *Sheng*.

The results reveal that in Nairobi most children are exposed to Kiswahili in most homes. In Lugare, most children are exposed to mother tongue. Although English is the language of instruction at school, it is not used by the children in most homes.

#### 5.4.2.11 Parents' views on *Sheng*

Apart from the above question on the language used most at home by the children, parents were asked about their perception of *Sheng* as a kind of language spoken by children and the youth in most urban and some rural areas in Kenya. Table 5.87 indicates the parents' views.

Table 5.87 Parents view on *Sheng*

| Parents perception of <i>Sheng</i> | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Affects Kiswahili and English      | 66      | 80  | 10     | 20  |
| Spoils children                    | 4       | 5   | 5      | 10  |
| It is a youth language             | 12      | 15  | 3      | 5   |
| No response                        | 0       | 0   | 33     | 65  |
| Total                              | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

In Nairobi, most parents cited the effects of *Sheng* on the two school languages; English and Kiswahili. 80% reported that *Sheng* affects the two official languages used in school, thus English and Kiswahili. 5% said that *Sheng* spoils children. These views are similar to those reported by the head teachers in this study. Spoiling of children refers to cases where children plan to do things behind their parents or even teachers. In most cases they talk about what they want to do in the presence of their parents knowing that the parents will

not understand. 15% of the parents felt that *Sheng* was a youth language. This implies that children and youth will continue to use it generation after generation as their language of communication.

In Lugare 20% of parents also felt that *Sheng* impacts negatively on English and Kiswahili. 10% of the parents felt that it spoils children. Only 5% felt that *Sheng* is a youth language. The rest of the parents did not respond. This could mean that the impact of *Sheng* has not been felt in Lugare district as much as is the case in Nairobi although children have access to the language through the radio.

In order to fight against this emerging language that has become a threat to the established languages, and in particular to Kiswahili, parents should be encouraged to avail quality reading materials in Kiswahili for their children.

#### **5.4.2.12 Parents' views towards the integration of children's literature in the Kiswahili language curriculum**

In an effort to discover the opinions of parents towards integration of children's literature in the Kiswahili language curriculum, they were asked to say whether they supported it or not and also give reasons for their views. Table 5.88 reveals the parents' views.

Table 5.88 Parents' views towards integration of children's literature in Kiswahili language curriculum.

| Responses | Nairobi | %   | Lugare | %   |
|-----------|---------|-----|--------|-----|
| Yes       | 73      | 89  | 45     | 88  |
| No        | 9       | 11  | 6      | 12  |
| Total     | 82      | 100 | 51     | 100 |

The findings indicate that 89% of parents from Nairobi and 88% from Lugare reported that they supported the integration of children's literature in the Kiswahili language curriculum. Only 11% of parents from Nairobi and 12% from Lugare do not support the integration of children's literature in the Kiswahili language curriculum. These findings show that most parents are positive towards the integration of children's literature in the Kiswahili curriculum.

Parents who supported the integration were further asked their reasons for supporting the integration of children's literature. The answers ranged from improving the language of the pupils, to helping the children differentiate between the school official languages and *Sheng*. Other reasons included enhancing creativity in children and helping to develop and maintain reading habits among children. Those parents who did not support the idea of integration felt that reading would take most of the children's time instead of revising their school work. In addition some said that children will not be examined in children's literature.

## **5.5 Summary of the chapter**

In this chapter, findings from the Head teachers, Kiswahili teachers, pupils and parents have been presented and discussed with a view to showing the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya. The data collected were connected to the research questions together with findings from the interview and the observations made. This was done in order to present the overall findings in regard to the research questions and objectives of the study.

The first section of the study presented findings from the head teachers. The head teachers' questionnaire was intended to provide data on school related information that could explain the role of the school in enhancing reading habits in schools. The first section of the head teachers' questionnaire measured variables that included the head teachers qualification and experience, age, type of school and skills acquired in teacher training regarding children's literature. The second section focused on the literary aspects which involved availability of Kiswahili storybooks in school, availability of a school library, language(s) of instruction used at various school levels, head teachers views on *Sheng* and also their attitudes towards the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili in the Kiswahili language.

The second section focused on Kiswahili teachers. The Kiswahili teacher questionnaire generated information that shows the role of Kiswahili teachers in enhancing reading habits in class. Information was generated regarding Kiswahili teacher qualifications, experiences, training in children's literature course in teacher training college, membership in the storybook selection committee, criteria for selecting Kiswahili storybooks for pupils,

estimated number of Kiswahili storybooks in the school library, literary classroom practices, teaching use of library, Kiswahili storybooks used in class, role of children's literature in language improvement, children's literature in Kiswahili and the enhancement of other subjects, Kiswahili teachers' views towards integrating children's literature and Kiswahili language, teachers as readers and role models for their pupils, and presence of reading or debating clubs in schools and parental involvement in pupils' reading activities.

The third section involved the pupils. The pupils' questionnaire generated information on the demographic aspect of the pupils and their family members. In addition data that reflected the following literary aspects was generated from the pupils, i.e. reading enjoyment, the number of books read in a term and during school holidays, reasons for reading, reading preferences and interesting issues in the stories read, sharing of books with friends, when and how they read and ownership of a reading diary, availability and use of public library and book exhibition attendance, ownership of books at home, reading of newspapers, parents' reading habits, and lastly role of sibling in encouraging reading habits.

The fourth section presents the findings from the parents regarding their role in enhancing reading habits among their primary school going children. This was done by focusing on the following aspects; provision of reading materials such as storybooks and newspapers to children at home; the involvement of parents in the reading of stories by their children, parents' perception towards their children's reading and how they support and encourage children to read. The views of parents on *Sheng* as a kind of language spoken by the children and finally the attitudes of parents towards the integration of children's literature into Kiswahili language lessons were also sought. It is important to note here that due to the method that was used to select parents for the sample, the obtained results cannot be applied to the entire population. However, the results can point to certain tendencies in certain families and it serves as an encouragement for further research.

This study in line with other studies (c.f. Arici 2008) has observed that reading is an interactive process and is greatly influenced by a variety of variables. For instance the reader's background, individual cognitive developmental level, the classroom context, availability and accessibility of reading materials, teacher's style of instruction, learning goals and the home environment all play a role in enhancing reading habits among pupils.

In order to promote wider reading among children, there is need to put more emphasis on reading for pleasure both at school and at home. Secondly, it is imperative now for teacher education courses to focus also on reading for leisure education. The teachers in turn need to use various classroom teaching strategies because one single method of teaching cannot be applied to all pupils successfully. Finally, it is important to recognize the role of parents in enhancing reading habits. All parents with school going children have a responsibility of introducing books to children as well as becoming explicit role models.



## **6 Summary, conclusion and recommendations**

In this chapter, we summarize the findings of our research and make some didactic conclusions. This will be done with the research objectives and research questions in mind. This means that the research questions have to be revisited. Implications of the study and recommendations are ultimately made from issues relating to current research in children's literature and also recommendations for future research on related issues.

### **6.1 Research objectives and research questions revisited**

In the year 2002, Kiswahili language curriculum developers in Kenya expanded the goals of Kiswahili language to include children's literature with the aim of fostering of positive attitudes towards reading at the same time cultivating reading habits among school going children. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools by focusing on the reading habits of pupils. The reading habits were measured in terms of the pupils' attitudes towards reading, the amount of reading materials available to the pupils both at school and at home, the accessibility of the reading materials, the frequency of reading for pleasure, the reading environment that pupils are exposed to and any other activities that pupils engage in that contribute to enhancing and maintaining of reading habits. The study also examined the contribution of the head teachers, Kiswahili teachers and parents in enhancing positive reading habits in children. The aspects that were focused on were how they avail storybooks to the children and also how they act as literary role models to their children.

A review of recent related literature and research reveals that no research has been carried out in children's literature to find out the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in relation to their reading habits and the role of other stake holders in enhancing reading habits among pupils. This state of affairs is unfortunate since it is necessary to assess the progress and success of a programme that has been initiated and implemented by the government.

The current research was undertaken with the following objectives in mind:

1. Describe the present state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya by focusing on its development.

2. Asses the role of head teachers and Kiswahili teachers in enhancing reading habits in school.
3. Examine the reading habits of primary school pupils in Kiswahili in Kenya both at school and at home by finding out their attitudes towards reading, asses the amount of reading materials available to the pupils in Kiswahili, accessibility of storybooks, the frequency of reading for pleasure and other activities that contribute towards enhancing of reading habits
4. Assess the role of parents in enhancing reading habits at home.
5. Propose strategies for the improvement of reading habits in Kiswahili among primary school pupils.

Specifically, the study set out to answer the following questions:

1. How has the language policy in education impacted on the development of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenya?
2. Are Kenyan pupils exposed to enough Kiswahili storybooks at each level of their studies in class or at home?
3. What are the reading habits of pupils both at school and at home?
4. How accessible are the storybooks to the children both at school and at home?
5. What strategies do Kiswahili teachers employ in the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili and Kiswahili language in the classes thus enhancing reading habits among pupils?
6. What role do parents play in enhancing good reading habits in their primary school going children?

## **6.2 Summary of findings**

From the study carried out and the research questions asked, the research emerged with the various findings related to the state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya. The summary of the findings are presented in four sections in relation to the various stake holders in children's literature. They include findings from the head teachers, Kiswahili teachers, pupils and parents.

### **6.2.1 Head teachers' findings**

To sum up the findings from the head teachers responses, it was revealed that majority of head teachers did not receive skills in handling of children's literature during their teacher training college. Regarding the selection of storybooks, the head teachers indicated that they found it necessary to involve Kiswahili teachers in the selection of storybooks. This was so as to follow the laid down regulation stated by the Ministry of Education regarding book selection procedures. Since the head teachers relayed on disbursement of funds from the government, the books were bought once in a year as the government availed funds to schools only once a year. It was revealed that half of the schools that participated in the study had more than fifty storybooks written in Kiswahili.

In addition the study revealed that primary schools in Lugare faced problems in acquisition of storybooks due to lack of adequate supply of storybooks in the nearest bookshops. The findings on availability of libraries in schools was a challenge faced by a majority of primary schools in Lugare and half of the primary schools in Nairobi that participated in the study. In the few schools that had libraries or book stores, it was found that such facilities varied in size, capacity and quality. In addition to this, many schools lacked school librarian to manage the school storybooks. Also it was noted that most schools did not have storybook borrowing policy thus making it impossible for pupils to have an access to storybooks to read at their own pleasure.

It was further noted that head teachers did not regard newspaper magazines as sources of encouraging reading for pleasure. This denied pupils who have an interest in reading newspaper to exercise their reading skills beyond the textbooks. In addition it was noted that a number of schools from Lugare did not have radios. And finally with regard to head teachers' attitudes towards integration of children's literature in the Kiswahili curriculum, it was noted that they were positive about it.

### **6.2.2 Kiswahili teachers' findings**

The findings from the Kiswahili teachers revealed that like the head teachers, most of the Kiswahili teachers had not been trained in children's literature methods. In addition, most Kiswahili teachers have not attended in-service courses to enhance their skills in handling children's literature in Kiswahili.

It was however noted that majority of Kiswahili teachers were involved in selecting storybooks for their pupils. The Kiswahili teachers selected storybooks based on the following criteria: authors, class levels and content.

Regarding the use of Kiswahili storybooks in class the study revealed that most Kiswahili teachers introduced storybooks to pupils from class four. This means that lower class pupils were denied an opportunity to develop reading habits in their early life of school. Classroom practices in most schools included giving exercises in reading, classroom discussion and reading together in class. There was an indication that a majority of Kiswahili teachers guided their pupils on how to use the school library.

In regard to the use of storybooks and language improvement, most Kiswahili teachers indicated that there has been an improvement in Kiswahili language use among pupils since the introduction of the integration programme. The Kiswahili teachers noted in this study that, children's literature enriches other school subjects and therefore they were positive towards the integration of children's literature in Kiswahili language lesson.

However it was revealed that most Kiswahili teachers are not literary role models to their pupils. Thus a majority of them have no interest in reading children's books.

As a way of enhancing reading habits, a majority of schools in Nairobi have reading or debating clubs while most schools in Lugare did not have reading or debating clubs. This was attributed to teachers' attitudes towards reading and thus lack of interest in supporting the pupils to enhance their reading habits. Finally it was observed that there was teacher-parent working relationship among most Kiswahili teachers in regard to reading activities of the children at school and at home.

### **6.2.3 Pupils' findings**

Data on reading attitudes of pupils towards reading revealed that majority of pupils in the study indicated that they liked reading. Only a small number of pupils indicated that they did not like reading. It was noted however that these pupils do not reading enough as per the stipulated number of storybooks that one should read in a year. It was revealed that the concept of reading among the majority of pupils was geared towards passing examinations. Other reasons for enjoying reading were related to the efferent effects of reading.

Regarding reading in the two official languages of the school, most pupils said that they choose to balance their reading of storybooks in which the stories are written.

The study revealed that the interest of pupils in regard to the choice of storybooks varied. Majority of pupils were impressed by adventure stories, trickster animals and the lessons learnt from the stories. Majority of pupils in the study reported that they liked discussing and borrowing storybooks from their friends.

The study revealed that most of the pupils had their own preferred places of reading. These included the sitting room and the bed room. In addition the pupils preferred to read after lunch and after supper. At the same time, most pupils prefer not to engage in more than one activity as they read their storybooks. It was however noted that majority of pupils did not have a storybook reading diary. This means that it is not possible to trace their trends in reading

Regarding the relationship between pupils and their Kiswahili teachers in relation to the teachers' interest in what the pupils were reading, some pupils revealed that some of their Kiswahili teachers showed interest in their reading of storybooks.

The study also revealed that a majority of pupils have no access to the public libraries found in the country. It was also revealed that a majority of pupils have not attended any book exhibitions held in the country. Most pupils indicated that they own storybooks at home.

Having role models was revealed to be lacking among majority of pupils as they indicated that their parents and siblings do not read storybooks while at home. Finally the study revealed that most pupils liked reading newspapers since most of them could access them at home.

#### **6.2.4 Parents' findings**

Generally the findings reveal that most parents indicated that they buy storybooks for their children. However some parents did not buy storybooks for their children. This was explained by the meagre resources and low incomes among some of the parents in particular those in Lugare and some poor areas in Nairobi. Regarding borrowing of

storybooks for their pupils from either friends or the library, most parents noted that they did not borrow storybooks for their children.

The majority of parents recognized reading storybooks as necessary for their children in various aspects of their growth. The study revealed that most parents in Nairobi read children's stories but majority of parents from Lugare did not. In addition, regarding reading storybooks for the children, most parents from Nairobi revealed that they read stories to children when they were young but they stopped this activity when the children acquired the necessary reading skills that enabled them to read for themselves. On the other hand majority of parents from Lugare indicated that they did not read for their children. The study revealed that most parents had observed the reading interest in their children

Regarding proximity to public libraries majority of parents indicated that they had no access to the public libraries. The data on reading of newspapers by parents indicated that most parents were engaged in reading of the various types of newspapers published in Kenya but mainly those written in English.

Regarding how children spent their time at home most parents reported that most children spend their time doing home work. This was followed by children getting involved in various chores at home, watching television and interacting with friends.

This study revealed that Kiswahili and English are the languages most spoken in Nairobi homes while in Lugare majority of pupils are exposed to the mother tongues and Kiswahili at home. Finally, the study has shown that parents are positive regarding the integration of children's stories in the Kiswahili language curriculum

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The findings related to this study were based upon the responses of 48 head teachers, 111 Kiswahili teachers, 1860 pupils and 133 parents. This section discusses the conclusion based upon the analysis of data. From the findings it has been revealed that the majority of head teachers have tried to make use of the free primary education funds to buy storybooks for their pupils in Kiswahili. However, most head teachers are faced with lack of good libraries where pupils can do their reading. In addition it emerged that pupils have little exposure to a range of titles, suggesting that publishing in Kiswahili has been slow. The

research also revealed that most pupils are interested in reading newspapers and magazines. Therefore head teachers need to recognise these preferences among pupils. All head teachers had positive attitudes towards the integration of children's literature in the Kiswahili curriculum. The majority of the head teachers supported the programme because of its contributions to increasing knowledge of other school subjects.

The results from Kiswahili teachers reveal that although a majority of Kiswahili teachers try to follow the syllabus by integrating children's stories in class, only pupils in upper classes seem to be the only beneficiary of the programme. Most of the lower classes pupils are ignored. In addition the results reveal that most Kiswahili teachers are not literary role models for their pupils. Therefore it is not possible for them to adequately select storybooks that will satisfy the needs of their pupils.

Kiswahili teachers agreed that since the inception of the integration program, they have noticed major changes in the attitudes of pupils towards Kiswahili language. This has led to improvement in the pupils' language skills. The Kiswahili teachers also consider children's literature as important owing to its contribution in understanding of other subjects offered in school.

Regarding the pupils' findings, it was revealed that although most pupils indicated that they loved reading, an examination of the amount of storybooks read reveals that most of them are not avid readers. Secondly, it was revealed that most of the reading done by the pupils was based on passing examination and not reading for leisure. The study revealed that pupils in lower classes do not seem to gain adequately from the storybook program since most teachers indicated that reading of storybooks begins in class four. Thirdly, the study revealed that most pupils have no access to public libraries. Although most schools have storybooks the storybook borrowing policy is too strict in most schools. Finally the study revealed that pupils lack active literary models both at school and at home.

Parents showed positive attitudes towards the introduction of children's literature in Kiswahili in the Kiswahili curriculum. Parents who participated in the study indicated that they support reading habits in children by buying storybooks and newspapers for their children however they leave the reading to their children. The results revealed that parents are not literary reading models for their children.

## **6.4 Implications**

The results of this study have implications on education research and practice. The following implications have been generated from the findings of the study. First, there was a significant relationship between head teachers, Kiswahili teachers, pupils and parents towards reading of storybooks. In view of this findings, the development of positive attitudes towards children's literature in Kiswahili should be one of major tasks performed by Kiswahili teachers, educators and all other stake holders in children's literature. The attitude of Kiswahili teachers may determine whether they give adequate attention to children's literature and to incorporate it in the Kiswahili language lessons. Also as Kiswahili teachers plan their language lessons, they should make efforts to know the kind of storybooks available, know what their pupils like and use the pupils' attitudes to promote reading habits among pupils.

## **6.5 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are suggested for the purpose of improving children's literature education in Kenya. The recommendations are based on the findings of the study.

- There is need for students in teacher training colleges to be well grounded in approaches to integrating children's literature in a Kiswahili language lesson in order to facilitate effective and efficient reading habits among the pupils later on when they get into the practice of teaching in schools.
- The Ministry of Education through the Kenya Institute of Education should arrange for all Kiswahili teachers to be given the relevant training in children's literature constantly. This will help Kiswahili teachers learn current and proven approaches, methods, techniques, strategies and skills for using children's literature in class.
- The government through the Ministry of Education needs to make sure that all primary schools have well equipped libraries and it should stress the importance of library hour in schools.
- Head teachers should make sure that there is an equal balance of storybooks in the two official languages of school thus English and Kiswahili.



- The Ministry of Education should also develop an effective training for teacher-librarians who maintain school libraries.
- Accessibility to storybooks for pupils should be made a priority by the head teachers.
- Pupils in primary schools should be encouraged to read as early as possible and should be encouraged to read more storybooks in Kiswahili so as to develop a reading culture in pupils.
- The Kenya National Library Service should extend ‘The School Book Box Library’ project to other rural areas so as to create interest in storybooks for those children who live in disadvantaged areas that are far from the static urban libraries.
- In order to cultivate the art of listening and even storytelling, all primary schools should be encouraged to purchase audio and video machines.
- Workshops should be held in schools to show teachers how to initiate and sustain vibrant reading and writing clubs in their schools. This will help both teachers and learners to see writing and reading as tools for lifelong learning.
- Publishers should be encouraged to produce stories in audio forms.
- Parents need to be encouraged by schools to create a literary-rich home by making the home conducive to reading. As Ofori-Mensah (2002: 21) puts it, “revamping the literacy skills of the pupils is a communal responsibility and should not be left to teachers alone.”
- Finally, there is need to consider the role of children’s literature in relation to the national goals of education of the country.

## **6.6 Suggestions for further reading**

This study was limited to primary schools in Nairobi and Lugare. Therefore further research is recommended to cover a wider area so as to establish the extent to which the findings of this study could be generalized to the whole country, thus getting a better understanding of children’s reading habits. Further research could be carried out to find out how girls and boys read in Kenya. Another research could be carried out to find out how

children choose what they read. Further, there is need to carry out classroom observation in relation to how teachers handle a children's literature lesson. Longitudinal studies which follow up pupils who demonstrate positive attitudes towards children's literature and those who performed exceptionally well in their examinations should be investigated. Such studies might reflect the need for developing positive attitudes towards reading in early classes.



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## Appendix 1 Interview guide for head teachers

Language and Literary Education: The State of Children's Literature in Kiswahili in Primary Schools in Kenya.

Hello!

My name is Pamela Ngugi. I am undertaking research on, **Language and Literary Education: The state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya**. My aim is to find out the reading habits of Kenyan pupils both at home and in school. The findings will help in proposing ways of helping pupils in Kenya develop better reading habits both at home and in school.

**The information you provide will be used for purposes of this study only and will be reported in summary form with the responses from other participants.**

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questionnaire No:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Initials of Interviewee:* \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly answer the following questions:

### Section A: Background Information

1. Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

2. District : \_\_\_\_\_

3. Division: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Zone : \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is your school : Public ( ) Private ( )

6. Sex: Female: ( ) Male: ( )

7. Age:

25 - 30 ( )

31 - 35 ( )

36 - 40 ( )

41 - 45 ( )

46 + ( )

8. What is the level of your education?

(a) Graduate Teacher ( )

Name of the university you graduated from \_\_\_\_\_

- (b) S1/ Diploma ( )  
 (c) Trained primary teacher ( )  
 (d) I am currently pursuing first degree ( )

9. Name of University \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a graduate teacher, what were your teaching subject combinations at the university? \_\_\_\_\_

(If not a graduate teacher, go to question no.12)

10. If your subject combination was either Literature in English and Kiswahili, were you taught children's literature?

Yes ( ) No ( ) Non applicable ( )

11. If Yes, in which subject: Kiswahili ( ) Literature in English ( )

12. For how long have you worked as a teacher?

5 - 10 years ( )

10 - 15 years ( )

15 + years ( )

13. Were you taught children's literature in the teacher training college?

Yes ( ) No ( )

14. What other subjects do you teach in your school?

| <u>Subjects</u>                     | <u>Class</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Kiswahili                           | _____        |
| English                             | _____        |
| Mathematics                         | _____        |
| Science                             | _____        |
| G.H.C. (Geography, History, Civics) | _____        |

15. What language is used in your school as medium of instruction in?

Primary class 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_ Primary class 4-8 \_\_\_\_\_

16. What is the total number of pupils in each of these classes?

|               |                |                |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Class 1 _____ | Class 4. _____ | Class 7. _____ |
| Class 2 _____ | Class 5. _____ | Class 8 _____  |
| Class 3 _____ | Class 6. _____ |                |

## Section B: Literary practices in school

1. How many Kiswahili teachers are members of the Books' Selection Committee in your school? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How do you and your selection committee select storybooks from the list given in the 'Orange Book'?
3. How often does your school order for storybooks from Publishers?  
Once per term ( )                                          Once a year ( )
4. Do you experience any problems in ordering storybooks from publishers?  
Yes ( )  
No ( )
5. If Yes: What problems do you face?
6. Do you experience any problems in ordering storybooks from publishers?  
Yes ( )  
No ( )
7. If Yes: What problems do you face?
8. Approximately, how many Kiswahili storybooks has the school bought since the inception of Free Primary Education?  
1 - 10 ( )  
20 - 30 ( )  
40 - 50 ( )  
50 + ( )
9. Does your school have a library?  
Yes ( )                                          No ( )
10. If No, where do the pupils read from during the library hour?
11. If yes, are the pupils allowed to borrow storybooks from the library?  
Yes ( )                                          No ( )
12. If No: Why?
13. Do you have a school librarian?  
Yes ( )                                          No ( )
14. Does your school have storybooks in any of the mother tongues spoken in Kenya?  
Yes ( )                                          No ( )
15. If Yes: Approximately how many storybooks can one find in the school?



0- 5 ( )

5 - 10 ( )

10-15 ( )

16. Does your school buy any of the following Newspapers and School Magazines for the pupils?

Daily Nation ( ) Sunday Nation ( )

The Standard ( ) Sunday Standard ( )

Taifa Leo ( ) Taifa Jumapili ( )

Maneno ( ) Sparkle ( )

Sara ( )

Any other ( ) (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does your school have a radio or a radio Cassette?

Yes ( )

No ( )

18. If Yes: For what purpose is it used?

19. Do you put any restrictions to the languages children use in school? Please explain.

20. What is your view of *Sheng* as a 'language' used by pupils in their interactions?

21. With the inception of the new curriculum, have all your Kiswahili teachers attended an in- service Program that will help them inculcate practical skills and approaches in the teaching of Children's literature?

Yes ( )

No ( )

22. What is your view on the incorporation of Children's Literature in the teaching of Kiswahili language?

**END**

**Thank you very much for your time, effort and thoughtful responses.**

## Appendix 2 Interview guide for Kiswahili teachers

Language and Literary Education: The State of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya.

Hello!

My name is Pamela Ngugi. I am undertaking a research on, **Language and Literary Education: The state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya**. The aim of the study is to find out the reading habits among pupils; whether they have enough storybooks in Kiswahili and if they read the storybooks that are available to them and what kind of storybooks they would like to read. The results will help in proposing ways that will help develop better reading habits among the children.

The information you provide will be used for purposes of this study only and will be reported in summary form with responses from other participants.

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questionnaire No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Initials of interviewee**\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly answer the following questions:

Section A: Background Information

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_.

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_.

Zone: \_\_\_\_\_.

Is your school:        ( I ) Public ( )

(ii) Private ( )

Sex: Female        ( )

Male        ( )

Age:

20-25        ( )

26 - 30        ( )

31 -35        ( )

36 - 40        ( )

41 -.45        ( )

46. +        ( )

8. What is the level of your education?

Graduate teacher: ( )

Please give the name of the University you graduated from\_\_\_\_\_

S1 / Diploma teacher: ( )

Trained primary teacher: ( )

Untrained primary teacher: ( )

Currently pursuing a first degree Course: Name of University \_\_\_\_\_

9. For how long have you worked as a teacher?

0.-.5 years ( )

5.-.10 years ( )

10.-.15 years ( )

15. + years ( )

10. If you are a graduate teacher, what were your subject combinations at the university?

\_\_\_\_\_ (If not a graduate teacher, go to question 13)

11. If your subject combination at the university was either Literature in English and Kiswahili, were you taught children's literature in any of the two subjects?

Yes ( )

No ( )

12. If Yes: What subject \_\_\_\_\_

13. Were you taught Children's Literature in the Teacher Training College?

Yes ( )

No ( )

14. What other subjects do you teach?

| Subject                             | Class |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| English                             | _____ |
| Mathematics                         | _____ |
| Science                             | _____ |
| G.H.C. (Geography, History, Civics) | _____ |

15. What language(s) is used in your school as medium of instruction in?

(I) Primary class 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_. (ii) Primary class 4 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_.

### Section B: Literary practices in primary school

1. Are you a member of the Books' selection committee in your school?

Yes ( )

No ( )

2. If Yes: Please explain how you select storybooks from the list of books given in the 'Orange Book'

3. Does your school have a library?

Yes ( )

No ( )

4. Approximately, how many Kiswahili storybooks can one find in your school library?

0 - 10 ( )

10 - 20 ( )

30 - 40 ( )

50+ ( )

5. What kind of storybooks would one find in the library?

6. How often do pupils in your class use the library?

Once every week ( )

Twice a week ( )

Once a month ( )

Less than a month ( )

They do not use it ( )

7. Do you teach your pupils how to use the library?

Yes ( )

No ( )

8. If No, explain why?

9. If your school does not have a library, what do the pupils do during library hour?

10. Do you encourage your pupils to read Kiswahili storybooks?

Yes ( )

No ( )

11. If Yes: How do you encourage them?

12. If No, why don't you encourage them?

13. What is the size of your class?

0 - 20 Pupils ( )

20.-.30 Pupils ( )

30. - 40 Pupils ( )

40.-.50 Pupils ( )

50. +. Pupils ( )

14. In what class do you use Kiswahili storybooks?

Class 1 ( )

Class 5 ( )

Class 2 ( )

Class 6 ( )

Class 3 ( )

Class 7 ( )

Class 4 ( )

Class 8 ( )

15. Which storybooks do you use in the Kiswahili language lesson? Please name some of the titles:

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16. Why do you use these particular storybooks?

17. Do you discuss Kiswahili storybooks with your pupils in class?

Yes ( )

No ( )

18. If, Yes, which activities do you incorporate in the discussions?

19. Does your school have storybooks written in the local mother tongue?

Yes ( )

No ( )

20. Do pupils in your school read them?

Yes ( )

No ( )

The school does not have any storybooks in mother tongue ( )

21. What is your view on the incorporation of children's literature in the Kiswahili Syllabus?

22. Do you see any improvement in language use in Kiswahili among pupils since the introduction of Children's Literature in the syllabus? Please explain.

23. Do you see any relationship between the stories that pupils read and other subjects you teach in School?

24. How many Children's storybooks in Kiswahili do you as a teacher read in a term?

Please give some of the titles\_\_\_\_\_

25. Do you encourage and suggest to parents the storybooks they could buy for their children? Yes ( ) No ( )

26. What is the reaction of parents to your suggestion?

27. Do you think the involvement of parents in children's reading, encourages literacy development among pupils? Please explain how it encourages.

28. Do you think the storybooks that are available in your school meet the needs of the pupils' in terms of the level of language used and the content? Please explain.

29. Do your pupils ask you for storybooks to read?

They all ask me ( )

Some of them do ( )

No ( )

30. Do you think Children's Literature should be taught as a subject on its own in primary school?

Why?

31. Do you have a Reading Club or Drama Club in your School?

Yes ( )

No ( )

32. If Yes: Is it popular with the pupils?

Yes ( )

No ( )

33. If Yes: What interests the pupils?

34. If No: Why doesn't it interest them?

35. With the inception of the new syllabus, have you attended an in service programme to help you inculcate skills and approaches in children's literature teaching?

Yes ( )

No ( )

**END**

**Thank you very much for taking your time, effort and for your thoughtful responses.**

### Appendix 3 Interview guide for primary school pupils

Language and Literary Education: The state of children's literature in Kiswahili in primary schools in Kenya

Hello!

My name is Pamela Ngugi. I am undertaking a research on, "Language and Literary Education: The State of Children's Literature in Kiswahili in Primary Schools in Kenya". The aim of the study is to examine reading habits among pupils; whether they have enough storybooks in Kiswahili and whether they read the books that are available to them and what kind of books they would like to read more. The results will help in proposing ways that will help develop better reading habits in pupils.

The information you provide will be used for the purposes of this study only and will be reported in summary form with the responses from other participants.

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Questionnaire No: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee Initials \_\_\_\_\_.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions.

#### Section A: Background Information.

(Please, tick the correct answer where necessary)

1. Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_.

2. District: \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Division: \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Is your School: a). Public ( ) b). Private ( )

5. Class: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Sex: Girl ( ) Boy ( )

8. How many children are you in your family? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you have elder:

(i). Brother : Yes ( ) No ( )

(ii). Sister : Yes ( ) No ( )

10. Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_ (Write the name of the estate or village)

11. What is the level of education of your parent (s)/ guardian?

| Father              |     | Mother              |     | Guardian            |     |
|---------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| Primary             | ( ) | Primary             | ( ) | Primary             | ( ) |
| Secondary           | ( ) | Secondary           | ( ) | Secondary           | ( ) |
| Middle college      | ( ) | Middle College      | ( ) | Middle College      | ( ) |
| University          | ( ) | University          | ( ) | University          | ( ) |
| No Formal Education | ( ) | No Formal Education | ( ) | No Formal Education | ( ) |

### Section B: Literary Practices in School and at Home.

1. Do you like reading storybooks? Yes ( ) No ( )

If Yes: Why do you read storybooks?

If No: Why don't you like reading storybooks?

2. If you read storybooks, how many storybooks have you read

This term

Last term

(i) 1 storybook ( ) i) 1 storybook ( )

(ii) 2 storybooks ( ) ii) 2 storybooks ( )

(iii) 3 storybooks ( ) iii) 3 storybooks ( )

(iv) 4 storybooks ( ) iv) 4 storybooks ( )

(v) I have not read any storybook this term ( )

(vi) I did not read any storybook last term ( )

If you have not read any storybook, explain why you haven't read.

3. Were the storybooks that you read written in?

Kiswahili ( )

English ( )

Both English and Kiswahili ( )

Your Mother tongue ( )

4. Were the stories interesting?

Yes ( ) No ( )

Some were interesting ( )

5. Which three storybooks written in Kiswahili did you find interesting?

(Write down the titles of the storybooks)

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_



6. What interested you in these storybooks?
7. Do you discuss the stories you read with your friends?  
 Yes ( ) No ( )  
 Sometimes ( )
8. Do you borrow storybooks from your friends to read?  
 Yes ( ) No ( )
9. While at home, where do you read?  
 (i) Bedroom ( )  
 (ii) Sitting room ( )  
 (iii) Under a tree ( )
10. Do you read storybooks while listening to music?  
 Yes ( ) No ( )
11. What time do you read Kiswahili storybooks while at home?  
 Early in the morning ( )  
 After Lunch ( )  
 After Supper ( )
12. Where do you read Kiswahili storybooks while in school?  
 Library ..... ( )  
 In Class ( )  
 Under a tree ( )
13. How many Kiswahili storybooks did you read during the last holiday?  
 (i).1 ( )  
 (ii) 2 ( )  
 (iii) 3 ( )  
 (iv).4 ( )  
 (v). I did not read any ( )  
 Use of school library
14. Does your school have a library?  
 Yes ( ) No ( )
15. How often do you go to the Library?  
 (i) Once a week ( )  
 (ii) Once a month ( )

(iii) Once a term ( )

16. What do you read when you go to the library?

(i) Storybooks ( )

(ii) Textbooks ( )

(iii) Magazines ( )

**Use of public library**

17. Is there a public library near where you live?

Yes ( ) No ( )

18. If Yes: Do you go to the Library?

Yes ( )

No ( ) (If No: Go to Question 22)

19. How often do you go to the library?

(i) Once a week ( )

(ii) Once a month ( )

(iii).Less than a month ( )

(iv). During school holidays only ( )

20. What do you read when you go to the public library?

(I) Storybooks ( )

(ii) Textbooks ( )

(iii) Newspapers ( )

(iv) Magazines ( )

(v) Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you borrow storybooks from the public library?

Yes ( ) No ( )

22. If No: Why don't you go to the public library?

23. Have you ever attended a Book Exhibition?

Yes ( ) No ( )

I don't know what that is ( )

24. If Yes: Please explain where and when it was that you attended.

| Place | Year  |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

25. Does your Kiswahili teacher suggest to you the storybooks you should read during your free time?
- Yes ( ) No ( )
26. Name some of the storybooks that the teacher suggested this term or last term.
27. Do you have a diary in school where you write the storybooks that you have read in a term?
- Yes ( ) No ( )
28. Do your parents buy Kiswahili storybooks for you?
- Yes ( ) No ( )
- They buy storybooks in English only ( )
29. Do you ask them to buy you the storybooks or they just buy and bring them to you?
- I ask them to buy ( )
- I don't ask them ( )
30. How often do they buy the storybooks?
- Once per term ( )
- Once per year ( )
- Every term ( )
31. If you have elder brothers or sisters, do they read storybooks at home?
- Yes ( ) No ( )
- I don't have an elder sister or brother ( )
32. If Yes: Do you ever borrow them the storybooks to read?
- Yes ( ) No ( )
- If No: Why don't you?
33. Do your parents read storybooks at home?
- Yes ( ) No ( )
34. Do you read newspapers or school magazines while at home?
- Yes ( ) No ( )
- I do not have access to any newspapers / school magazines ( )
35. If Yes: Which once among the following do you read?
- Tick the once you have read)
- Daily Nation ( )
- Sunday Nation ( )

- The Standard ( )  
 Sunday Standard ( )  
 Taifa Leo ( )  
 Taifa Jumapili ( )  
 Maneno ( )  
 Sara ( )  
 Sparkle ( )  
 Any other ( ) (Name it) \_\_\_\_\_

36. Which article (s) interest you in the newspapers?

| Newspaper | Article |
|-----------|---------|
| _____     | _____   |
| _____     | _____   |
| _____     | _____   |
| _____     | _____   |

37. Do you think your school library has the kind of storybooks you like?

Yes ( ) No ( )

38. If No: What kind of storybooks should be bought for your school library?

39. Do you think reading storybooks help you in any way?

Yes ( ) No ( )

40. Please explain how reading helps you

41. Do you speak *Sheng*?

Yes ( ) No ( )

42. If Yes: With whom do you speak it with?

- i). Friends ( )  
 ii). Brother (s) and sister (s) ( )  
 iii). Parents ( )  
 iv). Teachers ( )

43. Do you think storybooks should also be written in *Sheng*?

Yes ( )

No ( )

If Yes: Why?

**END**

**Thank you very much for taking your time to answer my questions**

## Appendix 4 Interview guide for Parents

Language and Literary Education: The State of Children's Literature in Kiswahili in Primary Schools in Kenya.

Hello!

My name is Pamela Ngugi. I am undertaking research on, "**The state of children's literature in primary schools in Kenya**". The aim of the study is to find out about the reading habits of children at home and in school their reading preferences. The findings will help in suggesting ways in which children can be encouraged to develop better reading habits while at home and in school.

The information you provide will be used for purposes of this study only and will be reported in summary form with the responses from other participants.

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Questionnaire No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Initials of Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date/ Tarehe:** \_\_\_\_\_

Parent: Mother / Mama ( ) Father /Baba ( ) Guardian / Mlezi ( )

Please answer the following Questions / Tafadhali jibu maswali yafuatayo:

### **Section A: Background Information/ Habari za Kimsingi**

**(Please Tick where necessary / Tafadhali weka alama x panapohitajika)**

1. Where do you live? / Unaishi wapi?

Name of Estate / Jina la Mtaa \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your village? Jina la kijiji \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your level of Education? / Kiwango chako cha elimu ni:

(i). Primary/ Shule ya Msingi ( )

(ii). Secondary / Sekondari ( )

(iii). College / Chuo ( )

(iv). Graduate / Nina Shahada ( )

(v). No formal education / Sijasoma. ( )

3 What kind of work do you do? / Unafanya kazi gain? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many children do you have / Una watoto wangapi? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do they go to a / Je, wanasoma katika shule ya:

(i). Private School / Kibinafsi ( )

(ii).Public School / Serikali ( )

6. How old are you? / Je, Una umri wa miaka mingapi?

20-25 ( )

25-30 ( )

30-40 ( )

40-45 ( )

45+ ( )

7. What language (s) do your children speak while at home? / Je, watoto wako huzungumza lugha ipi wakiwa nyumbani?

(i) Kiswahili ( )

(ii) English/ Kiingereza ( )

(iii) Mother Tongue / Lugha ya Mama ( )

(iv) *Sheng* ( )

**Section B: Literary practices at home / Hali ya usomaji nyumbani**

**(In this section we would like to know more about the reading habits of your children / Katika sehemu hii tungependa kujua zaidi iwapo mtoto/ watoto wako wanasoma vitabu vya hadithi katika Kiswahili wakiwa nyumbani.)**

1. Do you buy or borrow storybooks for your children? /Je, wewe huwanunulia au kuwaomba watoto wako vitabu vya hadithi?

I buy / Mimi hununua ( )

I borrow / Mimi huomba ( )

I don't buy /Sinunui ( ) (If you don't buy skip to question 6 /

Iwapo hununui jibu swali la 6)

2. If You buy: How often do you buy? / Iwapo unanunua je, wewe huvinunua mara ngapi?

Once a month / Mara moja kwa mwezi ( )

Once a term / Mara moja kwa kila Muhula ( )

Every term / Kwa kila muhula ( )

3. In what ways do you see storybooks helping your child (ren)? / Ni kwa namna gain hadithi zinawasaidia watoto?

4. Do you buy children's storybooks written in: / Je, wewe hununua vitabu ambavyo vimeandikwa kwa:

Kiswahili ( )

English /Kiingereza ( )

Both / Lugha zote ( )

5. If you buy storybooks written in English only or Kiswahili only, why do you concentrate on one language? / Ikiwa wewe hununua vitabu ambavyo vimeandikwa katika Kiingereza tu au Kiswahili pekee yake, ni kwa nini unashughulika na lugha moja tu?
6. If No, why don't you buy them? / Ni kwa nini huwanunulii watoto wako vitabu vya hadithi?
7. If you buy storybooks for your children, do you ever read them yourself? / Iwapo unawanunulia watoto wako vitabu vya hadithi, wewe mwenyewe unavisoma pia?  
Yes / Ndiyo ( )                                              No / La ( )
8. If Yes: What makes you read the storybooks? / Ikiwa unavisoma ni kitu gain kinachokufanya uvisome?
9. If No: why don't you read the storybooks? / Ikiwa huvisomi ni kwa nini huvisomi?
10. Do you read stories to your children? / Je, wewe huwasomea watoto wako hadithi?  
(i). I used to read / Nilikuwa nikiwasomea ( )  
(ii). I do read / Mimi huwasomea ( )  
(iii). I have never read / Sijawahi kuwasomea ( )
11. If you used to: Why did you stop? / Ikiwa ulikuwa ukiwasomea, ni kwa nini uliacha?
12. If you do: Why do you think it is necessary to read stories to your children? / Ikiwa unawasomea, ni kwa nini unafikiri ni muhimu kufanya hivyo?
13. Do your children who are in Primary school like reading storybooks? / Je, watoto wako wanaosomea shule ya msingi wanapenda kusoma vitabu vya hadithi?  
Yes / Ndiyo ( )                                              No / La ( )
14. If Yes: What type of storybooks do they read? / Ikiwa wanapenda, je, ni hadithi za aina gain wanazosisoma?  
No idea what they read Sijui wanasoma hadithi za aina gain ( )
15. If No: Why don't they like reading? / Ikiwa hawapendi ni kwa nini hawapendi?
16. Do your children ask you to buy them storybooks? / Je, watoto wako hukuomba uwanunulie vitabu vya hadithi?  
Yes / Ndiyo ( )                                              No / La ( )
17. What kind of storybooks do they ask you to buy them? / Je, wao hutaka wananuliwa vitabu vya hadithi za aina gain?



18. Which of the following newspapers do you buy? / Kati ya magazeti haya, wewe hununua lipi au yapi?
- Daily Nation ( )
- Sunday Nation ( )
- The Standard ( )
- Sunday Standard ( )
- Taifa Leo ( )
- Taifa Jumapili ( )
- I don't buy any ( ) (If you don't buy Skip to question 20/ Iwapo hununui, jibu swali la 20)
19. If you buy any of the newspapers, do your children read them? / Iwapo wewe hununua magazeti, je watoto wako huyasoma?
- Yes / Ndiyo ( ) No / La ( )
- Sometimes / Wakati mwingine ( )
20. Is there a public library within your home area? / Je, kuna maktaba karibu na mahali mnakoishi?
- Yes / Ndiyo ( ) No / La ( )
21. Do your children go to the library? / Je, watoto wako huenda kwenye maktaba hii?
- Yes / Ndiyo ( ) No / La ( )
- Sometimes / Wakati mwingine ( )
22. If they go: How often do they go? / Iwapo wanaenda, wao huenda mara ngapi?
- (i) Every day after school / Kila siku baada ya shule ( )
- (ii) Saturdays only / Siku ya Jumamosi pekee yake ( )
- (iii) During holiday only / Wakati wa Likizo pekee yake ( )
23. If your children go to the library, do they borrow Kiswahili storybooks from the library? / Ikiwa watoto wako wanaenda maktabani, je, wao huomba vitabu vya hadithi kutoka maktaba?
- Yes / Ndiyo ( ) No / La ( )
- Sometimes / Wakati mwingine ( )
24. Do your children come home from school with storybooks to read? / Je, watoto wako huja na vitabu vya hadithi kutoka shuleni kuvisomea nyumbani?
- Yes / Ndiyo ( ) No / La ( )

25. Apart from reading storybooks, how do they spend their free time? / Kando na kusoma vitabu vya hadithi, je watoto wako hushughulika na mambo gani mengine wakati wao wa mapumziko?

Do homework / Hufanya kazi ya shule ( )

Help in housework / hufanya kazi za nyumbani ( )

Help on the farm / Husaidia shambani ( )

Chat with friends / huzungumza na marafiki ( )

Watch Television / Hutazama televisheni ( )

Play with friends / Hucheza na marafiki ( )

26. What is your view of Sheng as a language used by children? / Je, una maoni gani kuhusu matumizi ya Sheng miongoni mwa watoto wa shule?

27. Do you think the idea of incorporating children's stories in the new Kiswahili syllabus in primary school is good? / Je, unafikiri hali ya kuhusisha usomaji wa vitabu vya hadithi katika silabasi ya shule za msingi ni jambo nzuri?

Yes / Ndiyo ( ) No / La ( )

28. If Yes, how has it helped your child (ren)? / Ikiwa Ndiyo, jambo hili limesaidia vipi watoto wako?

**End/ Mwisho**

**Thank you very much for your time, effort and thoughtful responses / Asante sana kwa kutumia muda wako, kuyajibu maswali yetu kwa kina na kwa njia nzuri**

## Appendix 5 Book stores and libraries



Plate 1: Bookstore



Plate 2: School library



**Plate 3 School Library 2**



**Plate 4: Book-boxes**



## Appendix 6 Reading and writing workshop



**Plate 5: A reading workshop 1**



**Plate 6: A reading workshop 2**

## Appendix 7 Field work Research Permit

|                                                                            |                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| PAGE 2                                                                     | PAGE 3                                  |
| <b>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:</b>                                            | Research Permit No. MOST 13/001/37C 598 |
| Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss PAMELA MUHADIA                                     | Date of issue 5.9.2007                  |
| MUHADIA NGUGI                                                              | Fee received SHS.500.00                 |
| P.O.BOX 00400-70731                                                        |                                         |
| of (Address) NAIROBI                                                       |                                         |
| For PERMANENT SECRETARY<br>MINISTRY OF EDUCATION<br>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY |                                         |
| has been permitted to conduct research in                                  |                                         |
| Location,                                                                  |                                         |
| LUGARI & NAIROBI                                                           |                                         |
| District,                                                                  |                                         |
| WESTERN AND NAIROBI                                                        |                                         |
| Province,                                                                  |                                         |
| LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE                                                    |                                         |
| on the topic.                                                              |                                         |
| EDUCATION: THE STATE OF CHILDREN'S                                         |                                         |
| LITERATURE                                                                 |                                         |
|                                                                            |                                         |
|                                                                            |                                         |
| for a period ending 28TH FEBRUARY, 2008                                    |                                         |

**PERMANENT SECRETARY**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

M.O. ONDIEKI

FOR Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of  
Science and Technology

### Plate 7: Research permit from the Ministry of Education

# CITY COUNCIL OF NAIROBI



TELEGRAM "SCHOOLING"  
TELEPHONE: 221166/224281  
EXT. 2426/2590

CITY HALL ANNEXE  
P. O. BOX 30298 GPO  
NAIROBI

## CITY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

GL/NC/141 VOL II/199

17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2007

All Headteachers  
City Council Primary Schools  
NAIROBI

### RE : RESEARCH AUTHORITY

I write to certify that **Pamela Muhadia of Kenyatta University** is authorised to visit council schools for the purpose of carrying out a research titled "**The State of Children's Literature**".

Therefore you are requested to facilitate this important study in your schools.

**F. L SONGOLE**  
**CHIEF ADVISER TO SCHOOLS**  
**FOR DIRECTOR OF CITY EDUCATION**

**Plate 8: Research permit from the City Education Department**

## **Curriculum vitae**

### **1 Personal Information**

**Name:** Pamela Muhadia Yalwala Ngugi.  
**Nationality:** Kenyan  
**Position:** Lecturer.  
**Department:** Kiswahili & African Languages, Kenyatta University, P.O Box 34844-100 Nairobi-Kenya.  
**Permanent Address:** P.O. BOX 70731-400 Nairobi-Kenya  
**Cell Phone:** 254722-792588  
**E-mail :** muhadiap@yahoo.com  
**Fax:** 254-2-211802.  
**Area of Specialization:** Language and literature in education.  
**Research Interests:** Children's literature.

### **2 Qualifications**

- Obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, Austria, Institute of African Studies. Title of my Project: "Language and Literary Education: The State of Children's Literature in Kiswahili in Primary Schools in Kenya."
- I have a Masters of Arts degree from the University of Nairobi in Linguistics majored in Swahili in 1992.
- Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nairobi, Second Class Honours (Upper Division) 1989

### **3 Professional Experiences:**

- 1992-1995: Taught at Maseno University College as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Kiswahili.
- 2003-2006: Part-time lecturer in the Department of Kiswahili at Catholic University of East Africa

### **4 Supervisions**

- 2005: Supervised a Masters of Arts student

### **5 Conference and Seminar presentations**

- 2009: Children's literature in Kiswahili and Free Primary Education in Kenya: An evaluation. Institute of African Studies-University of Vienna, Austria. 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2009
- 2009: The Role and place of children's literature in Kiswahili in Kenyan Primary schools. A conference organized by Reading for All Conference. University of Dar Es Salaam, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> August, 2009



- 2008: Swahili Curriculum in Education and Nationalism: The place of children's literature in enhancing Nationalism. A conference organized by CHAKITA. Fort Jesus -Mombasa, Kenya. 6th-9<sup>th</sup> August, 2008
- 2005: The contribution of the Germans to the spread and development of Kiswahili language and literature in East Africa. A conference Organized by DAAD on: Across Borders: Benefiting from Cultural Differences. University of Nairobi in Nairobi, Kenya. 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> March, 2005
- 2004: Convergences and Divergences in Africa: The Place of Kiswahili as a Unifying Language in Africa” Organized by The Africa Studies Centre, Tarbiat Modarres University, Tehran, I.R-Iran 23<sup>rd</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> November,
- 2003: Protecting and Empowering African Languages against Linguistic Genocide. A conference organized by LASU University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>
- 2001: Globalization and the Linguistic genocide of the African languages. A Conference organized by Chama Cha Kiswahili cha Kenya (Chakita) Egerton University, Nyahururu, Kenya. 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> October
- 2001: The Making of Young Literary Readers in Kenya". A Conference organized by the International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCL) Klein Kariba, South Africa. 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> August
- 2001: The Historical Role of Iranians (Shirazis) in the East African Coast: The contribution of Persian language to Kiswahili language. A Conference organized by the Cultural Council of Embassy of the I.R. Iran, Nairobi, Kenya 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> February
- 2000: Presented a paper entitled "*Uchunguzi wa Istilahi zinazotumiwa katika uwanja wa Tiba*" An International Conference organized by Chama cha Kiswahili cha Taifa (CHAKITA) Mombasa Kenya 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> October.

## **6 Workshops / Seminars**

- 2009: How to make a radio programme at the Orange94.0 station, Vienna, Austria. 27th-28<sup>th</sup> March,
- 2009: Alternative Technologies and Renewable Resources for a Sustainable Development” Organized by the Austrian Development Corporation, Leibnitz, Graz, Austria. 25th-28<sup>th</sup> February
- 2008: An Examination of the structure of eight selected bilingual dictionaries in Swahili. Institute of African Studies, University of Vienna, Austria. 8<sup>th</sup> May,
- 2006: Children's writers' Workshop: “Igniting Hope in the Children of Africa through Writing”, Savelberg Retreat Centre, Nairobi, Kenya 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, August
- 2005: Participated in a workshop for Assistant Researchers for the study: Risk of HIV/AIDS and Feasibility of Research among House Girls in Nairobi. Funded by USAID held on Nairobi, Kenya 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> November
- 2005: Attended a Regional Methodological Workshop on Social Sciences in Africa organized by Codesria, Kenyatta University, Nairobi Kenya 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> April,

- 2005: Attended a workshop on “Media and Governance” organized by The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (Codesria) held on 16<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> August- September, Dakar, Senegal.
- 1999: The Importance of Translation: Daisaku Ikeda's Translated works into Kiswahili" Seminar organized by The Writers' Association of Kenya held on, Nairobi, Kenya 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> December.
- 1995: Attended a workshop entitled 'Research Methodology I & II', organized by German Foundation for International Development (DSE) Egerton University, Nakuru, Kenya. 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> May

### **7 Books published (for children)**

- 1 2009: *Sisho Akutana na Wababeli*, East Africa Publishing House. Nairobi.
- 2 2009: *Kijana Mwaminifu*, East African Publishing House. Nairobi
- 3 2008: *Dani na Wezi wa Toyota*, Longhorn Publishers, Nairobi.
- 4 2008: *Wamenisingizia*, Phoenix Publishers, Nairobi.
- 5 2007: *Yaliyompata Ripuvan Winko*, Phoenix Publishers, Nairobi.
- 6 2007: *Alipata Tuzo*, Longhorn Publishers, Nairobi
- 7 2006: *Kwa Nini Ndovu Hali Nyama*, Longhorn Publishers, Nairobi.
- 8 2006: *Unajua ni kwa nini?* Phoenix Publishers, Nairobi
- 9 2006: *Asante Mama*, Phoenix Publishers, Nairobi
- 10 2005: *Ujeuri wa Mbwa*, Phoenix Publishers, Nairobi
- 11.2005: *Mazoezi ya Kiswahili: Darasa la Tatu*. Single Educational Publishers, Nairobi
- 12 2004: *Mazoezi Ya Kiswahili: Darasa la Pili*, Single Educational Publishers, Nairobi
- 13 2003: *Nikicheka Anacheka 1B*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi.
- 14 2003: *Kipengo 2B*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi.
15. 2003: *Si Kupenda Kwake 3B*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi.
16. 2003: *Usicheze na Moto 4B*, Oxford University Press, Nairobi.
17. 2002: Musau, Paul & Pamela M.Y.Ngugi, *Kunga za Kiswahili*, Didaxis, Nairobi.

### **8 Articles in Journals**

#### **Single Authorship**

- Ngugi Pamela M.Y.2000: Nafasi ya muziki uliopendwa katika fasihi ya Kiswahili” In: *Swahili Forum* VII No. 64. University of Koln, Germany.
- Ngugi Pamela M.Y. 1999: Kiswahili kama kilivyotumika nyakati za vita" In *Swahili Forum* V- No. 60, University of Koln, Germany.
- Ngugi Pamela M.Y. 1999: "Language development through music" In: the *Daily Nation*, Nairobi.

#### **Multiple authorship**

- Ngugi, Pamela M.Y. & Osore, Miriam. 2001: The contribution of Persian language to Kiswahili phonology and lexicon; In: *Historical Role of Iranians (Shirazis) in the East African Coast*, Published by The Cultural Council of the Embassy of I.R. Iran, Nairobi.
- Ngugi, Pamela M.Y. & Osore, Miriam. 2001: Maisha: kitendawili na johari (Life: An Enigma, a Precious Jewel). In: Henry Indangasi and Masumi Odari (eds)

*Daisaku Ikeda and Africa Reflection by Kenyan Writers*. Published by Nairobi University Press.

- Musau, Paul. & Ngugi, Pamela M.Y. 1997: Kiswahili Research in Kenyan Universities: Where are we now?" In: *Swahili Forum* VI No. 51, 1997, University of Koln, Germany

## **9. Translations**

- 2003: Ngugi, Pamela M.Y. & Osore, Miriam, Translated *Shrine of Tears* By Francis Imbuga to *Madhabahu ya Kilio* Published by Metro Language and Communication Centre.
- 2001 Commissioned by Friends of the Book Foundation to translate the following books to Kiswahili:
  - 1 Traditional Birth Attendance-*Wakunga wa Kienyeji*, published by Quest and Insight Publishers (2001)
  2. Breast feeding *Unyonyeshaji wa Maziwa ya Mama*, published by Quest And Insight Publishers (2001)

## **10 Papers Submitted for Publication.**

- Maudhui na mtindo katika *Ndoto Ya Amerika*-Submitted to *The Journal of Swahili Forum*
- Michongoano: Nafasi na ubunifu wake miongoni mwa watoto. *The Journal of Swahili Forum*
- Swahili curriculum in education and nationalism: The place of children's literature in enhancing nationalism, presented to CHAKITA *Journal of Kiswahili*.

## **Referees**

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